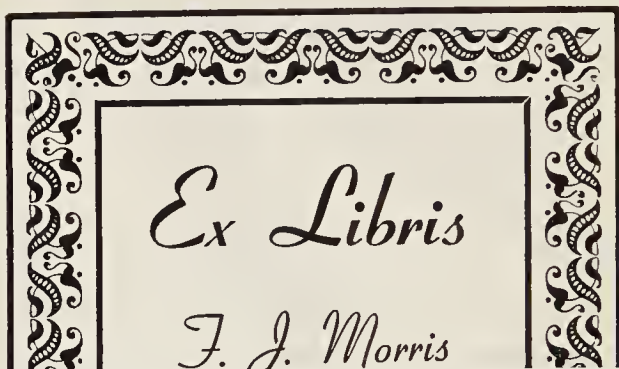




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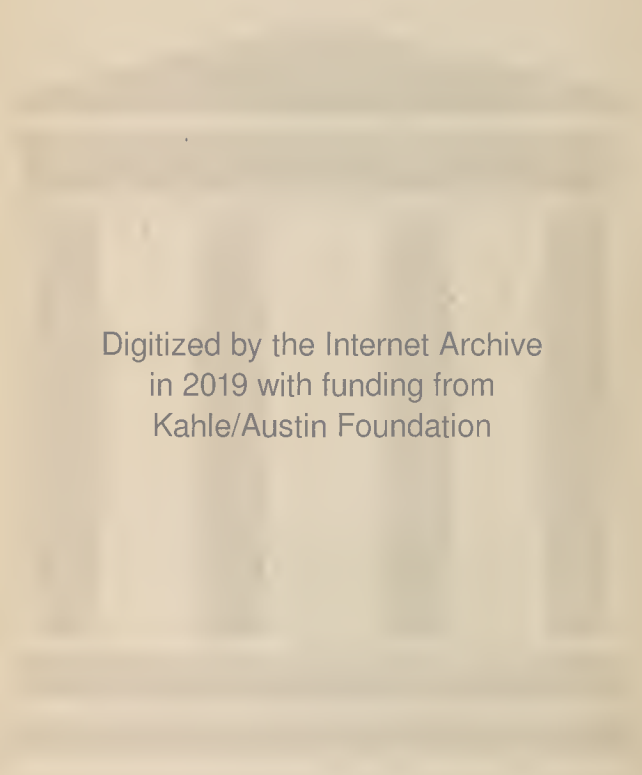






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Langland, William

THE VISION AND CREED

OF

# PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

EDITED,

FROM A CONTEMPORARY MANUSCRIPT,

WITH A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION,

NOTES, AND A GLOSSARY,

By THOMAS WRIGHT, M.A. F.S.A. &c.

Corresponding Member of the Imperial Institute of France,  
Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

*SECOND AND REVISED EDITION.*

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## *PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.*

**I**T is now thirteen years since the first edition of the following text of this important poem was published by the late Mr. Pickering, during which time the study of our old literature and history has undergone considerable development, and it is believed that a reprint at a more moderate price would be acceptable to the public. Holding still the same opinion which he has always held with regard to the superior character of the manuscript from which this text was taken, the editor has done no more than carefully reprint it, but, in order to make it as useful as he could, he has revised and made additions to both the Notes and the Glossary.

The remarkable poem of *The Vision of Piers Ploughman* is not only so interesting a monument of the English

## *PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.*

language and literature, but it is also so important an illustration of the political history of our country during the fourteenth century, that it deserves to be read far more generally than it has been, and the editor will rejoice sincerely if he should have contributed by this new edition to render it more popular, and place it within the reach of a greater number of readers. Independent of its historical and literary importance, it contains many beauties which will fully repay the slight labour required to master its partially obsolete language, and, as one of the purest works in the English tongue as it existed during the century in which it was composed, it is to be hoped that, when the time shall at length arrive when English antiquities and English philology and literary history are at length to be made a part of the studies in our universities and in the higher classes of our schools, the work of the Monk of Malvern, as a link between the poetry and language of the Anglo-Saxon and those of modern England, will be made a prominent text-book.

THOMAS WRIGHT.

14, SYDNEY STREET, BROMPTON,

Nov. 1855.



## *INTRODUCTION.*

**T**HE History of the Middle Ages in England, as in other countries, represents to us a series of great consecutive political movements, co-existent with a similar series of intellectual revolutions in the mass of the people. The vast mental development caused by the universities in the twelfth century led the way for the struggle to obtain religious and political liberty in the thirteenth. The numerous political songs of that period which have escaped the hand of time, and above all the mass of satirical ballads against the Church of Rome, which commonly go under the name of Walter Mapes, are remarkable monuments of the intellectual history of our forefathers. Those ballads are written in Latin ; for it was the most learned class of the community which made the first great stand against the encroachments and corruptions of the papacy and the increasing influence of the monks. We know that the struggle alluded to was historically unsuccessful. The baronial wars ended in the entire destruction of the popular leaders ; but their cause did not expire at Evesham ; they had laid foundations which no storm could overthrow, not

placed hastily on the uncertain surface of popular favour, but fixed deeply in the public mind. The barons, who had fought so often and so staunchly for the great charter, had lost their power ; even the learning of the universities had faded under the withering grasp of monachism ; but the remembrance of the old contest remained, and what was more, its literature was left, the songs which had spread abroad the principles for which, or against which, Englishmen had fought, carried them down (a precious legacy) to their posterity. Society itself had undergone an important change ; it was no longer a feudal aristocracy which held the destinies of the country in its iron hand. The plant which had been cut off took root again in another (a healthier) soil ; and the intelligence which had lost its force in the higher ranks of society began to spread itself among the commons. Even in the thirteenth century, before the close of the baronial wars, the complaints so vigorously expressed in the Latin songs, had begun, both in England and France, to appear in the language of the people. Many of the satirical poems of Rutebeuf and other contemporary writers against the monks, are little more than translations of the Latin poems which go under the name of Walter Mapes.

During the successive reigns of the first three Edwards, the public mind in England was in a state of constant fermentation. On the one hand, the monks, supported by the popish church, had become an incubus upon the country. Their corruptness and immorality were notorious : the description of their vices given in the satirical writings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries exceeds even the bitterest calumnies of the age of Rabelais or the



reports of the commissioners of Henry the Eighth.<sup>1</sup> The populace, held in awe by the imposing appearance of the popish church, and by the religious belief which had been instilled into them from their infancy, were opposed to the monks and clergy by a multitude of personal griefs and jealousies : these frequently led to open hostility, and in the chronicles of those days we read of the slaughter of monks, and the burning of abbeys, by the insurgent towns-people or peasantry. At the same time, while the monks in revenge treated the commons with contempt, there were numerous people who, under the name of Lollards and other such appellations,—led sometimes by the love of mischief and disorder, but more frequently by religious enthusiasm,—whose doctrines were simple and reasonable (although the church would fain have branded them all with the title of heretics),—went abroad among the people preaching not only against the corruptions of the monks, but against the most vital doctrines of the church of Rome, and, as might be expected, they found abundance of listeners. On the other hand, a new political system, and the embarrassments of a continued series of foreign wars, were adding to the general ferment. Instead of merely calling together the great feudal barons to lead their retainers to battle, the king was now obliged to appeal more directly to the people ; and at the same time the latter began to feel the weight of taxation, and conse-

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<sup>1</sup> See the "Apocalypsis Goliae" and other pieces in the poems of Walter Mapes ; the Order of Fair Ease in the Political Songs, and the Poems of Rutebeuf ; and, in English, the remarkable "Poem on the Evil Times of Edward 'II.'" in the appendix to the Political Songs. The Poem entitled the Order of Fair Ease bears some resemblance to the *Abbaye de Theleme* of Rabelais.

quently they began to talk of the defects and the corruptions of the government, and to raise the cries, which have since so often been heard, against the king's "evil advisers." These cries were justified by many real and great oppressions under which the commons, and more particularly the peasantry, suffered; and (as the king and aristocracy were too much interested in the continuance of the abuses complained of to be easily induced to agree to an effective remedy), the commons began to feel that their own interests were equally opposed to those of the church, of the aristocracy, and of the crown, and amidst the other popular doctrines none were more loudly or more violently espoused than those of levellers and democrats. These, though comparatively few, aggravated the evil, by affording a pretence for persecution. The history of England during the fourteenth century is a stirring picture; its dark side is the increasing corruption of the popish church; its bright side, the general spread of popular intelligence, and the firm stand made by the commons in the defence of their liberties, and in the determination to obtain a redress of grievances.

Under these circumstances appeared *PIERS PLOUGHMAN*. It is not to be supposed that all the other classes of society were hostile to the commons. The people, with the characteristic attachment of the Anglo-Saxons to the family of their princes, wished to believe that their king was always their friend, when not actuated by the counsels of his "evil advisers;"<sup>2</sup> several of the most powerful barons

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<sup>2</sup> This sentiment was perpetuated in a numerous class of ballads, in which the monarch is represented as thrown incognito among the lower classes, as

stood forward as the champions of popular liberty; and many of the monks quitted their monasteries to advocate the cause of the reformation. It appears to be generally agreed that a monk was the author of the poem of *Piers Ploughman*; but the question, one perhaps but of secondary importance, as to its true writer, is involved in much obscurity.<sup>3</sup> Several local allusions and other circumstances

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listening to their expressions of loyalty and to the tale of their sufferings. See the "Tale of King Edward and the Shepherd" in Hartshorne's *Ancient Metrical Tales*; "The King and the Barker," in Ritson's *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*; "The King and the Miller," and "King Edward IV. and the Tanner of Tamworth," in *Percy's Reliques*; &c. The earliest known form of this tale is the story of "Henry II. and the Cistercian Ahhot," printed from Giraldus Cambrensis in the *Reliquiæ Antiquiæ*, vol. ii. p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> It was at least a tradition early in the sixteenth century (for we have no means now of ascertaining whether there were any substantial grounds for the statement), that the author was named Robert Longlande (or Langlande), that he was born at Clechury Mortimer in Shropshire, and that (after receiving his education at Oxford) he became a monk of Malvern. I do not think, with Tyrwhitt and Price, that the name *Wil*, given in the poem to the dreamer, necessarily shows that the writer's name was *William*; and still less that the mention of "Kytte my wif" and "Calote my doghter" (p. 395 of the present volume), and of the dreamer's having resided at Cornhill, refer to the family and residence of the author of the poem. If he were a monk (as appears probable by his intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures and the Fathers), he would not be married. Sir Frederick Madden discovered a very important entry in a hand of the fifteenth century on the fly-leaf of a manuscript of *Piers Ploughman* in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, to the following effect—"Memorandum, quod Stacy de Rokayle, pater Willielmi de Langlond, qui Stacius fuit generosus, et morabatur in Schiptone under Whicwode, tenens domini Le Spenser in comitatu Oxon., qui prædictus Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur *Perys Ploughman*."—It would perhaps be not impossible to trace the name and history of this Stacy de Rokayle; but till that be done, I do not think this memorandum ought to be considered as overthrowing the old tradition relating to Robert Longlande. It may be mentioned as a remarkable specimen of the patriotism of David Buchanan, that he lays claim to the author of *Piers Ploughman* as a Scotchman:—"Robertus Langland, natione Scotus, professione sacerdos, vir ex obscuris ortus parentibus, pius admodum et ingeniosus et zelo divinæ gloriæ plenus; inter monachos Benedictinos educatus in civitate Aberdonensi, vir æque erat in omni humaniore literatura insigniter doctus, et in medicina admodum

seem to prove that it was composed on the borders of Wales, where had originated most of the great political struggles, and we can hardly doubt that its author resided in the neighbourhood of "Malverne hilles." We have less difficulty in ascertaining its date. At ll. 1735-1782, we have, without doubt, an allusion to the treaty of Bretigny, in 1360, and to the events which preceded it: in the earlier part of this passage there is an allusion to the sufferings of the English army in the previous winter campaign, to the retreat which followed, and the want of provisions which accompanied it, and to the tempest which they encountered near Chartres (the "dym cloude" of the poem). The "pestilences" mentioned at l. 2497 were the great plague which happened in 1348-9 (and which had previously been alluded to in the opening of the poem, l. 168), and that of 1361-2,—the first two of the three great pestilences which devastated our island in the fourteenth century. The south-western wind, mentioned in l. 2500, occurred on the fifteenth day of January 1362. It is probable that the poem of *Piers Ploughman* was composed in the latter part of this year, when the effects of the great wind were fresh in people's memory, and when the treaty of Bretigny had become a subject of popular discontent.<sup>4</sup>

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clarus, pium opus sermone vulgare scripsit cui imposuit, || Visionem Petri Aratoris, lib. 1. || Pro conjugio sacerdotum, lib. 1. || Claruit auno Christi Redemptoris, 1369. Regnante Davide Secundo in Scotia."—Dav. Buchanan, *de Scriptoribus Scotis*. MS. Bibl. Univ. Edin.

<sup>4</sup> We may mention another historical allusion in *Piers Ploughman*, which seems to involve a chronological difficulty; the dry April in the mayoralty of John Chichester, l. 8567. It appears clear that this is an allusion to a remarkable drought in the year 1351, which answers precisely to a calculation of the



The poem was given to the world under a name which could not fail to draw the attention of the people. Amid the oppressive injustice of the great and the vices of their idle retainers, the corruptions of the clergy, and the dishonesty which too frequently characterised the dealings of merchants and traders, the simple unsophisticated heart of the ploughman is held forth as the dwelling of virtue and truth. It was the ploughman, and not the pope with his proud hierarchy, who represented on earth the Saviour who had descended into this world as the son of the carpenter, who had lived a life of humility, who had wandered on foot or ridden on an ass. "While God wandered on earth," says one of the political songs of the beginning of the fourteenth century,<sup>5</sup> "what was the reason that he would not ride?" The answer expresses the whole force of the popular sentiment of the age: "because he would not have a retinue of greedy attendants by his side, in the shape of grooms and servants, to insult and oppress the peasantry."

At the period when this poem was first published, England, in common with the rest of Europe, had been struck with a succession of calamities. Little more than twelve years had passed since a terrible pestilence had swept away perhaps not less than one-half of the popula-

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date given in the text, in which all the manuscripts that I have consulted agree. But the only year in which Chichester is said to have been mayor was 1368-9 according to some, or 1369-70 according to others. Stowe (as quoted in the note on this passage) has altered the text of *Piers Ploughman* to suit the year in which Chichester is known to have been mayor: yet there can be little doubt (even from the allusion to the treaty of Bretigny) that the poem itself was composed before that date, and therefore the same or another Chichester had probably been mayor before.

<sup>5</sup> Political Songs, p. 240.

tion.<sup>6</sup> The lower classes, ill fed and neglected, perished by thousands, while the higher ranks—the proud and pampered nobility—escaped; “he who was ill nourished with unsubstantial food,” says a contemporary writer, “fell before the slightest breath of the destroyer; to the poor, death was welcome, for life is to them more cruel than death. But death respected princes, nobles, knights, judges, gentlemen; of these few die, because their life is one of enjoyment.”<sup>7</sup> It was the general belief that this fearful visitation had been sent by God as a punishment

<sup>6</sup> This terrible calamity was said by the astrologers to have been brought about by an extraordinary conjunction of Saturn with the other planets, which happened scarcely once in a thousand years. An astrologer and physician, who witnessed its effects, Symon de Covino, has left a Latin poem on the subject under the title *De Judicio Solis in Conviviis Saturni*, in which he describes Saturn as indulging his malevolence towards the human race by obtaining a judgment against men for their sins. This opinion is alluded to in *Piers Ploughman*, l. 4453,

“And so seide Saturne,  
And sente yow to warne.”

The influence of this plauet was represented by astrologers as being peculiarly noxious, as is expressed in the following old distich:—

“Jupiter atque Venus boni, Saturnusque malignus,  
Sol et Mercurius cum Luna sunt mediocres.”

7 “Qui male pastus erat fragili virtute ciborum,  
Labitur exiguo percussus flamine cladis;  
Indeque Saturni vulgus, pauperrima turba,  
Grata morte cadunt, quia vivere talibus est mors.  
Post quos lunares pereunt et mercuriales,  
Et sic debilior succumbit in ordine primo;  
Post alii tandem pestem secuntur eandem.  
Sed dea principibus et nobilibus, generosis,  
Militibus, seu judicibus fera Parca pepercit.  
Raro cadunt tales, quia talibus est data vita  
Dulcis in hoc mundo, quam gloria laudat inanis.”

*Symon de Covino*, in the *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, tom. ii. p. 236.

for the sins which had more particularly characterised the higher orders of society ; yet instead of profiting by the warning, they became, during the years which followed, prouder, more cruel and oppressive, and more licentious, than before. Another pestilence came, which visited the classes that had before escaped, and at the same time a tempest such as had seldom been witnessed seemed to announce the vengeance of heaven. The streets and roads were filled with zealots who preached and prophesied of other misfortunes, to people who had scarcely recovered from the terror of those which were past. At this moment the satirist stepped forth, and laid open with unsparing knife the sins and corruptions which provoked them.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the Latin poems attributed to Walter Mapes, and the Collection of Political Songs, form an introduction to the Vision of Piers Ploughman. It seems clear that the writer was well acquainted with the former, and that he not unfrequently imitates them. The Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II. already alluded to (in the Political Songs) contains within a small compass all his chief points of accusation against the different orders of society. But a new mode of composition had been brought into fashion since the appearance of the famous "Roman de la Rose," and the author makes his attacks less directly, under an allegorical clothing. The condition of society is revealed to the writer in a dream, as in the singular poem just mentioned, and as in the still older satire, the *Apocalypsis Goliciæ*; but in Piers Ploughman the allegory follows no systematic plot, it is rather a succession of pictures in which the

allegorical painting sometimes disappears altogether, than a whole like the Roman de la Rose, and it is on that account less tedious to the modern reader, while the vigorous descriptions, the picturesque ideas, and numerous other beauties of different kinds, cause us to lose sight of the general defects of this class of writings.

Piers Ploughman is, in fact, rather a succession of dreams, than one simple vision. The dreamer, weary of the world, falls asleep beside a stream amid the beautiful scenery of Malvern Hills. In his vision, the people of the world are represented to him by a vast multitude assembled in a fair meadow ; on one side stands the tower of Truth, elevated on a mountain, the right aim of man's pilgrimage, while on the other side is the dungeon of Care, the dwelling place of Wrong. In the first sections (*passus*) of the poem are pictured the origin of society, the foundation and dignity of kingly power, and the separation into different classes and orders. In the midst of his astonishment at what he sees, a fair lady, the personification of "holy church," approaches, to instruct the dreamer. She explains to him the meaning of the different objects which had presented themselves to his view, and shows by exhortations and examples the merit of content and moderation, the danger of disobedience (exemplified in the story of Lucifer's fall), and the efficacy of love and charity. In the midst of his conversation with his instructor, a lady makes her appearance on the scene. This is lady Mede, the personification of that mistaken object at which so large a portion of mankind direct their aim—the origin of most of the corruptions and evil deeds in the world—not the just remuneration of our actions

which we look forward to in a future life, but the reward which is sought by those who set all their hopes on the present. Holy Church now quits the dreamer, who is left to observe what is taking place amid the crowd in the field. (*Passus II.*) They all pay their court to lady Mede, who, by the intermediation of Cyvyle, or the law, is betrothed in marriage to Falsehood. The marriage is forbidden by Theology, and Cyvyle agrees to carry the cause to London for judgment, contrary to the desire of Simony. Falsehood and Flattery bribe the lawyers to aid the former in his suit, but their designs are baffled by Conscience, at whose suggestion the king takes the lady into his own custody, and drives away Falsehood and his greedy followers. Mede soon finds favour at court (*Passus III.*), and especially with the friars, who are ready to absolve her of all her sins for a proper consideration. The king proposes to marry her to Conscience; who, however, declines the match, and as a reason for his refusal gives a very unfavourable picture of the lady's previous life and private character. Mede defends herself, and accuses Conscience of thwarting and opposing the will and designs of kings and great people. The dispute becoming hot, the king interferes and orders Mede and Conscience to be reconciled and kiss each other. (*Passus IV.*) This Conscience refuses to do, unless by the advice of Reason; on whose arrival, Peace comes into the parliament to make his complaint against the cruel oppressions of Wrong. Wrong is condemned, but Mede and the lawyers attempt to get him off with the payment of a sum of money. The king, however, allows himself to be guided by Reason and Conscience, expresses his dissatisfaction that law is influ-

enced by Mede, and his determination to govern his realm by the counsel of Reason.

In a second vision (*Passus V.*), the dreamer is again carried to the "field full of folk," where Reason has taken upon himself the character of a preacher, and, fortified with the king's authority, induces the various classes of sinners to confess and repent. The personification of the different sins forms perhaps the most remarkable part of the whole poem. The multitude being thus converted from their evil courses, are persuaded by Repentance and Hope to set out on a pilgrimage in search of Truth. In their ignorance of the path which they must follow in this search, they apply to a palmer who had wandered over a large portion of the world in search of different saints; but they find him as little acquainted with the way as themselves. They are helped out of this dilemma by Piers the Ploughman, who, seeing them terrified by the difficulties of the road, offers to be their guide, if they will wait till he has sown his half acre. (*Passus VI.*) In the mean time all the pilgrims who have strength and skill, are employed on some useful works, except the knight, who undertakes, in return for the support which he is to derive from the ploughman's labours, to watch and protect him against plunderers and foreign enemies. The peace of the labourers is first disturbed by Waster, who refuses to perform the conditions by which the others are bound: the aid of the knight being found inefficient against this turbulent gentleman, the Ploughman is obliged to send for Hunger, who effectually humbles him. This section of the poem is a continued allusion to the effects of the famine and pestilence, and a satire upon the luxurious and extravagant life



of our forefathers in the fourteenth century. (*Passus VII.*) Truth, hearing of the intentions of Piers the Ploughman to leave his labours in order to serve as a guide to the pilgrims in their journey, sends him a messenger, exhorting him to remain at home and continue his labours, and giving him a "pardon" which was to embrace all those who aided him honestly, by their works, and who should carry on their various avocations in purity of heart. The writer here takes occasion to sneer at the "pardons" of the pope, then so much in vogue; a priest questions the legitimacy of Piers' bull of pardon, and the altercation between them becomes so loud that the dreamer awakes. The pardon of Piers Ploughman is granted to those who do good works: the dreamer is lost in the speculation on the question as to what the good works are, and he becomes engaged in a new pilgrimage, in search of a person who has not appeared before,—Do-well.

(*Passus VIII.*) All his inquiries after Do-well are fruitless: even the friars, to whom he addresses himself, give but a confused account; and, weary with wandering about, the dreamer is again overtaken by slumber. Thought now appears to him, and recommends him to Wit, who describes to him the residence of Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best, and enumerates their companions and attendants. (*Passus IX.*) The Castle of Do-well is an allegorical representation of man (the individual), in which lady Anima (the soul) is placed for safety, and guarded by a keeper named Kynde (nature). With Do-well, the representative of those who live according to truth in honest wedlock, are contrasted the people who live in lust and wickedness, the descendants of the murderer Cain, who



was begotten by Adam in an evil hour. (*Passus X.*) Wit has a wife named lady Study, who is angry that her spouse should lay open his high truths to those who are uninitiated—it is no better than “throwing pearls to swine, which would rather have hawes.” Wit is daunted by his wife’s long lecture, and leaves the dreamer to pursue his own suit. This he does with so much meekness and humility, that the wrath of dame Study is appeased, and she sends him to Clergy, with a token of recommendation from herself. Clergy receives the pilgrim, and entertains him with a long declamation on the character of Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best, and on the corruptions of the church and the monkish orders, in the course of which is uttered the remarkable prophecy of the king who was to “confess and beat” the monks, and give them an “incurable knock,” which was after less than two centuries so exactly fulfilled in the dissolution of the monasteries. The wanderer confesses himself “little the wiser” for Clergy’s lecture, and by his pertness of reply merits a reproof from Scripture. (*Passus XI.*) In another vision the dreamer is exposed to the seductions of Fortune, whose two fair damsels, Concupiscentiacarnis and Covetousness-of-the Eyes, persuade him to enjoy the present moment, and lead him entirely from his previous pursuit. He is only recalled from his error by the approach of Old Age, and then he falls into the contemplation of a series of subjects, the covetousness of the friars who gave absolution from motives of personal interest, predestination, &c. Then Kynde, or Nature, came and carried him to a mountain, which represented the world, and there showed him how all other animals but man followed Reason; and

Imaginative came after, and told him that all his present doubt and anxiety had been brought upon him for contending with Reason and suffering himself to be led astray by Fortune. (*Passus XII.*) The whole of the next section of the poem is occupied with a long exhortation by Imaginative, concerning God's chastisements, the merits of Charity and Mercy, the greater responsibility before God of those who are learned and cannot sin ignorantly, the difficulty for the rich man to enter heaven.

(*Passus XIII.*) In another vision, Conscience meets with the dreamer, and takes him to dine with Clergy. Patience comes to the feast in beggar's weeds, but is seated in the most honourable place at the table. A doctor of the church is of the party, and distinguishes himself by his gluttony; and by discussing theological questions after dinner. At length Conscience and Patience go on a pilgrimage. In their way they meet with a minstrel, named Activa Vita, or Haukyn the Active-man, with a coat covered with spots of dirt, whom they question on his mode of life. (*Passus XIV.*) Haukyn the Active-man, the representative of that class of people who neglect their souls for their worldly affairs, excuses the dirtiness of his apparel on the ground that he has none to change, and that he has too many occupations to allow him time to have it cleaned. Conscience and Patience teach him a method to clean his coat, inform him where charity is to be found, and recommend patient poverty to him, showing him the advantage of poverty over riches. Haukyn's repentance and lamentation for the neglect of his duties awake the dreamer.

(*Passus XV.*) Amid his anxiety to know something

more certain of Do-well, the dreamer has another vision, in which Soul appears to him, and enters into a long relation of the corruptions and negligence of the clergy. (*Passus XVI.*) Soul finally sends him to Piers the Ploughman, who possesses the garden in which the tree of Charity grows, and which is rented under him by Free-will. Piers explains to him the nature of the tree, and of the props which support it; and shakes down some of the fruit for him. The allegory then changes, and we are introduced to the birth and passion of the Saviour, as arising out of the fruit of Charity. At this moment the dreamer awakes, and therewith loses sight of Piers the Ploughman; in his anxiety to find Piers, he meets with Faith, in the garb of Abraham, who was in search of God, now incarnate, and who waited for his passion in order to be delivered from hell. (*Passus XVII.*) Then comes Spes, or Hope, who also was in search of the knight that was to vanquish the evil one. As they go along the way towards Jerusalem to the "justes," discoursing on the obligations of the old and new law and the abrogation of the former, they meet with a man who had been left helpless by thieves, wounded and naked: Faith and Hope passed by without helping him, but the Samaritan, who was also riding to the "justes," descended from his horse, bound his wounds, and deposited him in an inn at the grange named *Lex Christi*. The Samaritan gives the dreamer a singular explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity; and, after having represented to him the heinousness of sins against the different persons, and the necessity of making reparation, he pursues his way to Jerusalem.

(*Passus XVIII.*) The vision which forms the eighteenth

section or *passus*, and in which the character of Piers the Ploughman is identified with that of the Saviour, is entirely occupied with an allegorical description of Christ's Passion, and his descent into Hell. (*Passus XIX.*) In the next section the history of Christ's passion and victory, and his figurative representative Piers the Ploughman, is continued. Grace, through Piers the Ploughman, descends upon the people, and lays the foundation of the Church, which is cultivated by Piers with his four oxen (the four Evangelists). Piers is attacked by Pride, who gathers a great host to assail the Church. Conscience advises the people who follow Piers (the Church), to take shelter in the stronghold of Unity, and make preparations for their defence. By the counsel of Kind-wit and Conscience they dig a great ditch around Unity. The measures of Surety are embarrassed by the unreasonable opposition of some members or parts of the community, who oppose Pier's doctrine of restitution—the brewer will not repent of the tricks which he puts on his customers, the vicar adheres to his simony, the lord will continue to oppress his tenants, and the king will not be restrained by his laws. (*Passus XX.*) In the last section of the poem, the dreamer, after having been accosted by Need, who preaches on the virtues of temperance, has a vision of Antichrist, who comes to attack the Castle of Unity. It must be remembered that at this period many people supposed that Antichrist was already on the earth, and that he was the cause of all the evils with which mankind was then visited, so that this last notion brought the allegory home to people's feelings. The standard-bearer of Antichrist was Pride. Conscience called Kynde, or Nature, to his aid, who brought an army

of diseases and pestilences. Death, one of his chief soldiers, made terrible havoc. At length Kynde ceased his ravages; and a horde of enemies immediately arose against Conscience, such as Fortune, Lechery, Covetousness, Simony. Life, with his mistress Fortune, indulged in all kinds of excess, until he was visited by Age and Despair, who treated him very roughly. The dreamer, forsaken by Fortune, and participating in the misfortunes of Life, by the advice of Kynde takes shelter with Conscience in the castle of Unity, which is threatened by an army of priests and monks. At length this stronghold is endangered by the entrance of Flattery, who is admitted in the disguise of a Physician. Conscience, unable to retain possession, embarks upon another pilgrimage in search of Piers the Ploughman, and the dreamer awakes. This is the conclusion of the poem. Whitaker thought that it should have had a more consoling end; but it must be remembered that the writer of *Piers Ploughman* designed to paint the world as it was, and to describe the numerous obstacles which lay in the way of the improvement and amelioration of mankind when he wrote.

While one member of the monastic order was thus contributing by his satirical pen towards producing a reform among his countrymen, another monk was beginning to preach in a still bolder manner against the popish system. This was John Wycliffe, under whom the despised lollards became an important sect. This attempt at religious reformation only formed part of the great movement of the fourteenth century, which soon afterwards broke out in the popular commotions of the reign of Richard II. The writer of *Piers Ploughman* was neither a sower of

sedition, nor one who would be characterised by his contemporaries as a heretic. The doctrines inculcated throughout the book are so far from democratic, that he constantly preaches the Christian doctrine of obedience to rulers. Yet its tendency to debase the great, and to raise the commons in public consideration, must have rendered it popular among the latter: and, although no single important doctrine of the popish religion is attacked, yet the unsparing manner in which the vices and corruptions of the church are laid open, must have helped in no small degree the cause of the Reformation. Of the ancient popularity of *Piers Ploughman* we have a proof in the great number of copies which still exist, most of them written in the latter part of the fourteenth century; and the circumstance that the manuscripts are seldom executed in a superior style of writing, and scarcely ever ornamented with painted initial letters, may perhaps be taken as a proof that they were not written for the higher classes of society. From the time when it was published, the name of *Piers Ploughman* became a favourite among the popular reformers.<sup>8</sup> The earliest instance of the adoption of that

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<sup>8</sup> We have a very remarkable proof of the popularity of *Piers Ploughman* with the lower orders (among whom probably parts of it were repeated by memory), and of its influence on the insurrections of the peasantry in the reign of Richard II., in the seditious letter of John Ball to the commons of Essex, preserved by Thomas Walsingham (*Hist. Angl.* p. 275). I am not sure if "*John Schep*" may not contain an allusion to the opening of the poem; but the second passage, here printed in Italics, refers evidently to Passus VI. and VII., and the third is an allusion to the characters of Do-well and Do-best.

"*John Schep* sometime Seint Mary priest of Yorke, and now of Colchester, graeteth well John Namelesse, and John the Miller, and John Carter, and biddeth them that they beware of guyle in borough, and stand together in Gods name, and biddeth *Piers Plowman* goe to his werke, and chastise well Hob the robber, and take with you John Trewman, and all his fellows, and no moe.



name for another satirical work is found in the Creed of Piers Ploughman, printed also in the present volume, and in which even the form of verse of the Vision is imitated.

In this latter poem, which was undoubtedly written by a Wycliffite, Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage—he is the simple representative of the peasant rising up to judge and act for himself—the English *sans-culotte* of the fourteenth century, if we may be allowed the comparison. When it was written, a period of great excitement had passed since the age of Langlande, the reputed author of the Vision—a period characterised by the turbulence of the peasantry—which had witnessed in France the fearful insurrection of the *Jacquerie*, and in England the rebellion of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw.<sup>9</sup>

In Piers Ploughman's Creed it is the church simply, and not the state, which is the object of attack. The clergy—and more particularly the monks—are accused of having falsified religion, and of being actuated solely by worldly passions—pride, covetousness, self-love. The writer, placing himself in the position of one who has just learnt the first grounds of religious knowledge, is anxious to find a person capable of instructing him in his creed, and with this object he addresses himself to the different orders of

John the Miller hath y-ground, smal, small, small. The kings sonne of heaven shal pay for all. Beware or ye be woe, know your frende fro your foe, Have ynough, and say hoe: And *do well and better*, and flee sinne, and seeke peace and holde you therin, and so biddeth John Trewman and all his fellowes."

<sup>9</sup> The mention of Wycliffe and of Walter Brute and other circumstances, fix the date of Piers Ploughman's Creed with tolerable certainty in the latter years of the reign of Richard II. It was probably written very soon after the year 1393, the date of the persecution of Walter Brute at Hereford; and from the particular allusion to that person we may perhaps suppose that like the Vision it was written on the Borders of Wales.



friars. He applies first to the Minorites, who abuse the Carmelites, and pride themselves in their own holiness. Disgusted with their jealousies and self-sufficiency, the inquirer seeks the Preachers, or Dominicans; amid their stately buildings, and under their sleek and well filled skins, he finds the same want of Christian charity: their pride drives him to the order of St. Austin. The Austin Friars, as well as the Carmelites, will only instruct him for money, and, shocked at their covetousness, he continues his wanderings, until at last he meets with a poor Ploughman, in whom he finds the charity and knowledge after which he has been seeking. The Ploughman enters into a bitter attack on the vices of all the four orders of friars: he describes their spirit of persecution, exemplified in the case of Wycliffe and others, and their simony; speaks of Wycliffe and Walter Brute as preachers of the truth; and finishes by teaching the inquirer his simple creed.

The Creed of Piers Ploughman was written by one who approved the opinions of Wycliffe, and it seems to have been carefully proscribed. There does not appear to exist any manuscript older than the first printed edition.

The great popularity of the Vision of Piers Ploughman in the fourteenth century, and its political influence, are proved by another close imitation, which was composed immediately after the capture, and previous to the deposition, of king Richard II. This poem also appears to have been proscribed, and we have only a fragment left, which was printed from an unique manuscript for the Camden Society. It also is composed in alliterative verse, and its meaning is rendered obscure by a confused allegorical style. It was evidently written towards the Welsh

Border, perhaps at Bristol, which is mentioned in the opening lines; and it appears to have been intended as a continuation of, or as a sequel to, *Piers Ploughman*, which it immediately follows in the only manuscript in which it is preserved.

Another early poem, of which the *Ploughman* is the hero, was inserted in the works of Chaucer under the title of the *Ploughman's Tale*. This, like the *Creed*, is free from allegory; and it differs from the others also in being written in rhyme, and not in alliterative verse. The *Ploughman's Tale* was probably written in the earlier half of the fifteenth century.<sup>10</sup> It is a coarse attack on the

<sup>10</sup> Different circumstances connected with this poem (which also appears to have been proscribed, for we have no early manuscript of it) lead me to suppose that it was written in the reign of Henry IV., when the *burning* of heretics came into fashion, which is alluded to in the following stanza:—

“ Were Christ on earth here, eftsoone  
These would damne him to die :  
All his hestes they han for-done,  
And saine his sawes ben heresie :  
And ayenst his commaundements they crie,  
And damne all his to be brende ;  
For it liketh not hem such losengerie,  
God almighty hem amend ! ”

In another passage, the writer of this poem alludes to the *Creed* of *Piers Ploughman* as though he were the author of it, and as a piece then known to everybody.

“ And all such other counterfaitours,  
Chanons, canons, and such disguised,  
Been Gods enemies and traitours.  
His true religion han foule despised.  
Of *freres* I have told before,  
In a *making of a Creed* ;  
And yet I could tell worse and more,  
But men would werien it to rede.”

Perhaps, however, the writer only claims the authorship of the *Creed* in his allegorical character, as the representative of that class of satirical writers who were then attacking the monastic orders.

different orders of the clergy, for their pride, covetousness, and other vices. Its versification has little merit; and there appears to be no good reason for inserting it among the *Canterbury Tales*.

The vision of *Piers Ploughman* appears to have continued to enjoy a wide popularity down to the middle of the fifteenth century. We hear nothing of it from that period to the middle of the sixteenth, when it was printed by the reformers, and received with so much favour, that no less than three editions, or rather three impressions, are said to have been sold in the course of one year. Another edition was printed at the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth; and it appears to have been much read in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and even at the beginning of the seventeenth. The name of *Piers Ploughman* is not uncommon in the political tracts of that period.<sup>11</sup>

The Poem of *Piers Ploughman* is peculiarly a national work. It is the most remarkable monument of the public spirit of our forefathers in the middle, or, as they are often termed, dark ages. It is a pure specimen of the

<sup>11</sup> We may enumerate the following as specimens of such works published in the sixteenth century. Several similar publications appeared in the century following.

"*Pyers Plowmans Exortation vnto the lordes, knights, and burgoysse of the parlyament house.*" 8vo. printed by Anthony Scholoker, in the reign of Edward VI.

"*Newes from the North, Otherwise called the Conference between Simon Certain, and Pierce Plowman, faithfully collected and gathered by T. F. Student.*" 4to. London, John Allde, 1579.

"*The Plowmans complaint of sundry wicked livers, and especially of the bad bringing vp of children; written in verse by R. B. printed for Hugh Corne, 1580.*" 8vo.

"*A goodlye Dialogue and dysputacion between Pyers Plowman and a Popish Preest, cōcernynge the Supper of the Lorde.*" 8vo, without date.

English language at a period when it had sustained few of the corruptions which have disfigured it since we have had writers of "Grammars;" and in it we may study with advantage many of the difficulties of the language which these writers have misunderstood. It is, moreover, the finest example left of the kind of versification which was purely English, inasmuch as it had been the only one in use among our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, in common with the other people of the North. To many readers it will be perhaps necessary to explain that rhyming verse was not in use among the Anglo-Saxons. In place of rhyme, they had a system of verse of which the characteristic was a very regular *alliteration*, so arranged that, in every couplet, there should be two principal words in the first line beginning with the same letter, which letter must also be the initial of the first word on which the stress of the voice falls in the second line. There has, as yet, been discovered no system of foot-measure in Anglo-Saxon verse, but the common metre consists apparently in having two rises and two falls of the voice in each line. These characteristics are accurately preserved in the verse of *Piers Ploughman*; and the measure appears to be the same, if we make allowance for the change of the slow and impressive pronunciation of the Anglo-Saxon for the quicker pronunciation of Middle English, which therefore required a greater number of syllables to fill up the same space of time.

We can trace the history of alliterative verse in England with tolerable certainty. The Anglo-Normans first brought in rhymes, which they employed in their own poetry. The adoption of this new system into the English

language was gradual, but it appears to have commenced in the first half of the twelfth century. It was, at first, mixed with alliterative couplets: that is, in the same poem were used sometimes rhyming couplets, which were suddenly changed for alliterative couplets, and then, after awhile, rhyme was again brought in, and so on. Of this kind of poetry we have four very remarkable examples, the *Proverbs of King Alfred*, a poem which was certainly in existence in the first half of the twelfth century;<sup>12</sup> the *Early English Bestiary*;<sup>13</sup> the Poem on the *Debate between the Body and the Soul*;<sup>14</sup> and the grand work of Layamon.<sup>15</sup> The following lines from the Bestiary may serve as a specimen of the manner in which the two systems are intermixed; they form part of the account of the spider:—

“ðanne renneð ge rapelike,  
for ge is ai redi,  
nimeð anon to ðe net,  
and nimeð hem ðere,  
bitterlike ge hem bit  
and here þanc wurðeð,  
drepeð and drinkeð hire blod,  
doð ge hire non oðer god,  
bute fret hire fille,  
and dareð siðen stille.”

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<sup>12</sup> Printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. pp. 170-188. On the date of this poem, see the *Biographia Britannica Literaria* (by the editor of the present work), Anglo-Saxon period, pp. 395, 396.

<sup>13</sup> Printed in the *Alteutsche Blätter* von Moriz Haupt und Heinrich Hoffmann, vol. ii. pp. 99-120, and in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. pp. 208-227.

<sup>14</sup> Discovered in a MS. at Worcester by Sir Thomas Phillipps, who published a small edition of it, in folio.

<sup>15</sup> Edited by Sir Frederick Madden, for the Society of Antiquaries.

“Cethegrande is a *fis*  
 ðe moste ðat in water *is*;  
 ðat tu wuldes seien *get*,  
 gef ðu it soge wan it *flet*,” etc.

This kind of poetry appears to have been common until the middle of the thirteenth century; after which period we only find alliteration in songs, not used in simple alliterative couplets, but mixed up in the same lines with rhyme in an irregular and playful manner.<sup>16</sup> But there appears little room for doubting that during the whole of this time the pure alliterative poetry was in use among the lower classes of society; and its revival towards the middle of the fourteenth century appears to have been a part of the political movement which then took place. In this point of view, the poem of Piers Ploughman becomes still more worthy of attention as a document of contemporary literary history. The old alliterative verse came so much into fashion at this period that it was adopted for the composition of long romances, of which several still remain.<sup>17</sup> The use of this kind of verse was continued in the fifteenth century, and was imitated in Scotland as late as the time of Dunbar, but the later writers were evidently unacquainted with the strict rules of this species of composition.

The Anglo-Saxons, who used this kind of verse only, wrote their poetry invariably as prose. But the scribe was in the habit of indicating the division of the lines by a dot.

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<sup>16</sup> Many instances of this will be found in my *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, composed in England in the reign of Edward the First (Percy Society Publication).

<sup>17</sup> Such as *William and the Werwolf*, edited by Sir Frederick Madden; the *Romance of Jerusalem*; that of *Alexander*; &c.



Among modern scholars a question has arisen as to the propriety of printing the alliterative couplet in two short lines, or in one long one. It appears to me that the mode in which the dot is used in the manuscripts decides the question in favour of the short lines. The manner in which the alliterative couplet is intermixed with the rhyming couplet in the poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (which also are written in the manuscripts in the same form as prose), seems to me a strong confirmation of this opinion; at least in these last-mentioned cases, the verse must have been considered as written in short lines. As the scribes quitted the custom of writing poetry in their manuscripts as prose, with the divisions of lines indicated by dots, to adopt that of arranging them in lines as we do at present, these short lines were found very inconvenient because they were obliged either to waste a great deal of parchment, or to write in several narrow columns. To remedy this, they fell perhaps gradually into the custom of writing the two parts of the alliterative couplet in one line, always, however, marking the division by a dot. They followed the same method with the shorter rhyming lines, as is the case with the old English Metrical Romance of Horn in a manuscript in the Harleian Collection.<sup>18</sup> All the alliterative poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is found written in these long lines, with the dot of

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<sup>18</sup> MS. Harl. 2253. In this manuscript, and in several others which I have seen, the rhyming poems in short lines, whether in English, Latin, or French, are arranged in this manner; and I have met with instances in which part of a poem has been arranged in this way, and other parts of the same poem have been arranged in short lines, to suit the scribe's convenience. I have a strong impression of having met with an early English manuscript in which a fragment of alliterative verse was written in short couplets.



division in the middle. In the fifteenth century the meaning of this dot appears to have been forgotten, and the system of alliteration so far misunderstood, that the writers thought it only necessary to have *at least* three alliterative words in a long line, without any consideration of their position in the line. I say *at least*, because they not unfrequently inserted four or five alliterative words in the same line, which would certainly have been considered a defect in the earlier writers. It is my opinion, that a modern editor is wrong in printing the verses of *Piers Ploughman* in long lines, as they stand in the manuscripts, unless he profess to give them as a fac-simile of the manuscripts themselves, or he plead the same excuse of convenience from the shape of his book. In either case, he must carefully preserve the dots of separation in the middle of the lines, which are more inconvenient than the length of the lines, because they interfere with the punctuation of the modern editor. If, as appears to be the case, these dots are merely marks to indicate the division of the couplet, their purpose is much better served by printing the lines in couplets. The construction of the earlier Anglo-Saxon verse, the analogy of the mixed rhyming and alliterative verses of the semi-Saxon poems, and the use of these dots in the middle of the lines in the manuscripts of *Piers Ploughman*, appear to me convincing proofs that it ought to be printed so. I think moreover that the alliterative verse reads much more harmoniously in the short couplets than in the long lines.

The manuscripts of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman* are extremely numerous both in public and in private collections. There are at least eight in the British Museum :

there are ten or twelve in the Cambridge Libraries; and they are not less numerous at Oxford. As might be expected in a popular work like this, the manuscripts are in general full of variations; but there are two classes of manuscripts which give two texts that are widely different from each other, those variations commencing even with the first lines of the poem. One of these texts, which was adopted in the early printed editions, is given in the present volumes; the other text was selected for publication by Dr. Whitaker. The following extract, comprising the first lines of the poem,<sup>19</sup> will show how each text begins, and will enable those who possess manuscripts of *Piers Ploughman* to ascertain at once to which text they belong:—

## TEXT I.

In a somer seson  
 Whan softe was the sonne,  
 I shop me into shroudes  
 As I a sheep weere,  
 In habite as an heremite  
 Unholy of werkes,  
 Wente wide in this world  
 Wonders to here,  
 Ac on a May morwenyng  
 On Malverne hilles  
 Me bifel a ferly,  
 Of fairye me thoghte.  
 I was wery for-wandred,  
 And wente me to reste  
 Under a broode bank  
 By a bournes syde,  
 And as I lay and lenede,  
 And loked on the watres,  
 I slombred into a slepyng,  
 It sweyed so murye.

## TEXT II.

In a somè seyson,  
 Whan softe was the sonne,  
 Y shop into shrobbis  
 As y shepherde were.  
 In abit az an ermite  
 Unholy of werkes,  
 That wente forthe in the worle  
 Wondres to hure,  
 And sawe meny cellis  
 And selcouthe thynges.  
 Ac on a May morwenyng  
 On Malverne hilles  
 Me by-fel for to slepe,  
 For weyrynesse of wandryng,  
 And in a lande as ich lay  
 Lenede ich and slepte,  
 And mervelyously me mette,  
 As ich may yow telle.  
 Al the welthe of this wordle,  
 And the woo hothe,

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<sup>19</sup> *Text I.* is from the edition now offered to the public: *Text II.* from that edited by Dr. Whitaker.

Thanne gan I meten  
 A merveillous swevene,  
 That I was in a wilderness  
 Wiste I nevere where ;  
 And as I biheld in to the eest  
 An heigh to the sonne,  
 I seigh a tour on a toft, etc.

Wynkyng as it were  
 Wyterly ich saw hyt,  
 Of truyth and of tricherye,  
 Of tresoun and of gyle,  
 Al ich saw slepyng,  
 As ich shal yow telle.  
 Esteward ich behulde  
 After the sonne,  
 And sawe a tour as ich trowede, etc.

Besides such variations as appear in the foregoing specimens, there are in the second text many considerable additions, omissions, and transpositions. It would not be easy to account for the existence of two texts differing so much ; but it is my impression that the first was the one published by the author, and that the variations were made by some other person, who was perhaps induced by his own political sentiments to modify passages, and was gradually led on to publish a revision of the whole. It is certain that in some parts of Text II. the strong sentiments or expressions of the first text are softened down. We may give as an example of this, the statement of the popular opinion of the origin and purpose of kingly government :—

## TEXT I.

Thanne kam ther a kyng,  
 Knyghthod hym ladde,  
 Might of the communes  
 Made hym to regne.  
 And thanne cam kynde wit,  
 And clerkes he made,  
 For to counseillen the kyng,  
 And the commune save.  
 The kyng and knyghthod,  
 And clergie bothe,  
 Casten that the commune  
 Sholde hem self fynde.  
 The commune contrevd  
 Of kynde wit craftes,

## TEXT II.

Thanne cam ther a kyng,  
 Knyghthod hym ladde,  
 The meche myghte of the men  
 Made hym to regne.  
 And thanne cam a kynde witte,  
 And clerkus he made,  
 And concience and kynde wit,  
 And knyghthod to-gederes,  
 Caste that the comune  
 Sholde hure comunes fynde.  
 Kynde wit and the comune  
 Contrevde alle craftes,  
 And for most profitable to the puple,  
 A plouh thei gonne make,

And for profit of al the peple  
 Plowmen ordeyned,  
 To tilie and to travaille,  
 As trewe lif asketh.  
 The kyng and the commune,  
 And kynde wit the thridde,  
 Shopen lawe and leauté,  
 Ech man to knowe his owene.

Wit lell labour to lyve,  
 Wyl lyve and londe lasteth.

Nobody, I think, can deny that in this instance the doctrine is stated far more distinctly and far more boldly in the first text than in the second. In general the first text is the best, whether we look at the mode in which the sentiments are stated, or at the poetry and language.

As far as I have been able to examine the remaining manuscripts of *Piers Ploughman*, at London and in the Universities, I think that nearly two-thirds of those which remain are of the *fourteenth* century; and the greater number, particularly of those written in the fourteenth century, present what I have distinguished as the first text, that given in the present volumes. I am by no means inclined to coincide in the reasons which led Dr. Whitaker to prefer the second text; if I were disposed to admit, as barely possible (the supposition is quite a gratuitous one), "that the first edition of this work appeared when its author was a young man, and that he lived and continued in the habit of transcribing to extreme old age" (Pref.), I cannot agree with an editor in adopting a copy which he believes to be "a faithful representation of the work as it came first from the author," and which not only abounds in words and idioms which he afterwards altered, but which contains also "many original passages which the greater maturity of the author's judgment induced him to expunge."

I know only of two manuscripts of the Creed of Piers Ploughman, one in the British Museum (MS. Reg. 18, B. XVII.), the other in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, both on paper, and written long after the date of the printed editions, from which they appear to have been copied.

The first printed edition of the Vision was that of Robert Crowley, in 1550; and it was so favourably received, that there is reason for believing that no less than three editions (or rather three impressions<sup>20</sup>) were sold in the course of the year. It is clear that Crowley had obtained an excellent manuscript; the printer has changed the orthography at will, and has evidently altered a word at times, but on the whole this printed text differs very little from the one we now publish.

Three years after the appearance of the Vision, another printer, Reynold Wolfe, published the first edition of the Creed, in the same form as Crowley's edition of the Vision.<sup>21</sup>

After the stormy reign of Mary was past, in the beginning of that of Elizabeth, the call for a new edition, and

<sup>20</sup> The title of the second impression is, "The Vision of Pierce Ploughman, nowe the seconde time imprinted by Roberte Crowley, dwellynge in Elye rentes in Holburne. Whereunto are added certayne notes and cotations in the mergyne, gevyng light to the Reader, &c. Imprinted at London by Roberte Crowley, dwellyng in Elye rentes in Holburne. The yere of our Lord M.D.L. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." 4to, 125 leaves.

<sup>21</sup> The title consists merely of the words "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede," upon a tablet in the midst of a wood-cut which had evidently been brought from the continent. A fac-simile of the most important part of the cut is given in Mr. Payne Collier's Bibliographical Catalogue of the Library of Lord Francis Egerton, p. 235. The colophon, on a separate leaf, is "Imprinted at London. By Reynold Wolfe. Anno Domini M.D.L.III." It consists of 16 leaves in 4to.

perhaps the destruction of many copies of the old one, led the well-known printer Owen Rogers to reprint the *Vision* and the *Creed* together.<sup>22</sup> The impression was probably large, for it is still by no means a rare book. It was evidently much read during the reign of Elizabeth, and is not unfrequently alluded to by the writers of that age.

No other edition of this popular poem appeared, until it was published by Dr. Whitaker, in 1813,<sup>23</sup> from a manuscript then in the possession of Mr. Heber,<sup>24</sup> which contained the second text, written in a rather broad provincial dialect. This edition was printed in black-letter, in a very large and expensive form. In 1814, a reprint of the old edition of the *Creed* was published in the same form, as a companion to the *Vision*. It is not generally known that Dr. Whitaker projected an edition of the same text and paraphrase which are given in his 4to edition, in 8vo, with Roman type instead of black-letter. After a few sheets had been composed, the design was abandoned, as it is

<sup>22</sup> The title of this edition is, "The *Vision* of Pierce Plowman, newlye imprinted after the authours olde copy, with a brefe summary of the principall matters set before every part called Passus. Wherevnto is also annexed the Crede of Pierce Plowman, neuer imprinted with the booke before. ¶ Imprinted at London, by Owen Rogers, dwellyng neare vnto great Saint Bartelmewes gate, at the sygne of the spred Egle. ¶ The yere of our Lord God, a thousand, fyve hundred, thre score and one. The xxi. daye of the Moneth of Februarye. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." 4to. This edition is not foliated, or paged; and it is remarkable that it is as frequently found without the *Creed*, as with it. This edition of the *Creed* is also sometimes found separate.

<sup>23</sup> Whitaker's edition bears the following title,—"Visio Willielmi de Petro Plouhman, Item Visiones ejusdem de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest. Or, The *Vision* of William concerning Piers Plouhman, and The *Visions* of the same concerning the Origin, Progress, and Perfection of Christian Life, &c. By Thomas Dunham Whitaker, LL.D., &c. 4to. London. Murray, 1813.

<sup>24</sup> This manuscript was bought at Heber's sale for the British Museum, where it is classed as Additional MS. No. 10,574.



said, in favour of the larger form. A copy of the proof sheets, formerly belonging to Mr. Haslewood, is now in the possession of Sir Frederick Madden. I am told that a rival edition was also begun, but not persevered in.

An attempt at a modernization, or rather a translation, of *Piers Ploughman*, was made in the earlier years of the present century, but only a few specimens appear to have been executed. The following lines, which possess some merit (though not very literal or correct), are the modern version the author proposed to give of ll. 2847–2870 of the poem. They were communicated to me by Sir Henry Ellis.

"Next *AVARICE* came; but how he look'd, to say,  
Words do I want that rightly shall portray:  
Like leathern purse his shrivell'd cheeks did shew,  
Thick lipp'd, with two blear eyes and beetle brow:  
In a torn threadbare tabard was he clad,  
Which twelve whole winters now in wear he had;  
French scarlet 'twas, its colour well it kept,  
So smooth that louse upon its surface crept."

It will be necessary, in conclusion, to say a few words on the edition now offered to the public. Without taking into consideration the inaccuracies and imperfections of Whitaker's edition, its inconvenient size and high price made it altogether inaccessible to the general reader; and there appeared to be a wish for one in a more convenient and less expensive form. At the same time it was desired that a good text of a work so important for the history of our language and literature should be selected. Dr. Whitaker was not well qualified for this undertaking; he also laboured under many disadvantages; he had access to only three manuscripts, and those not very good ones; and he has not chosen the best text even of those. Unless



he had some reason to believe that the book was originally written in a particular dialect, he ought to have given a preference to that among the oldest manuscripts which presents the purest language; but we cannot allow that manuscript to be chosen on a ground so capricious as "that the orthography and dialect in which it is written approach very near to that semi-Saxon jargon in the midst of which the editor was brought up, and which he continues to hear daily spoken on the confines of Lancashire, and the West Riding of the county of York." (Pref.) This could not have been the language employed by a monk of Malvern.

The present editor has endeavoured, in the leisure moments which he has been able to snatch from other employments, to supply the deficiency as well, and in as unassuming manner, as he could. He has chosen for his text a manuscript belonging to the valuable library of Trinity College, Cambridge (where its shelf-mark is B. 15, 17), because it appears to him to be the best and oldest manuscript now in existence. It is a fine folio manuscript, on vellum, written in a large hand, undoubtedly contemporary with the author of the poem, and in remarkably pure English, with ornamented initial letters. His object has been to give the poem as popular a form as is consistent with philological correctness. He has added a few notes which occurred to him in the course of editing the text, and which he hopes may render the meaning and allusions sometimes clearer to the general reader, for whom more especially they are intended. They might have been enlarged and rendered more complete, if he had been master of sufficient leisure to enable him to undertake extensive

researches. But there are allusions, as well as words, in both poems to which it would be difficult at present to give any certain explanation. It has been thought advisable to give in the notes the important variations of the second text, from Dr. Whitaker's edition ; and a few readings are added from a second manuscript in Trinity College Library (R. 3, 14). The editor has hoped to add to the utility of the book by a copious glossary. He has been unwillingly obliged to leave a few words without explanation ; all our early alliterative poetry abounds in difficult words. In this point he has to acknowledge the kind assistance of Sir Frederick Madden, whom no person equals in profound knowledge of English glossography, and than whom no one is more generous to advise and assist those who are in need of his aid. To Sir Henry Ellis, who kindly lent him his own manuscript notes on *Piers Ploughman*, the editor also owes his grateful acknowledgments ; and he regrets that at the time he received them the notes were already so far printed as to hinder him from making as much use of them as he could have wished.

*London, June 1, 1842.*



THE VISION OF PIERS  
PLOUGHMAN.







THE VISION OF  
PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

**I**N a somer seson  
Whan softe was the sonne,  
I shoop me into shroudes  
As I a sheep weere,  
In habite as an heremite  
Unholy of werkes,  
Wente wide in this world  
Wondres to here ;  
Ac on a May morwenynge  
On Malverne hilles 10  
Me bifel a ferly,  
Of fairye me thoghte.  
I was very for-wandred,  
And wente me to reste  
Under a brood bank  
By a bournes syde ;  
And as I lay and lenede,  
And loked on the watres,  
I slombred into a slepyng,  
It sweyed so murye. 20

Thanne gan I meten 21  
A merveillous swevene,  
That I was in a wilderness,  
Wiste I nevere where,  
And as I biheeld into the eest  
An heigh to the sonne,  
I seigh a tour on a toft  
Trieliche y-maked,  
A deep dale bynethe,  
A dongeon therinne,  
With depe diches and derke  
And dredfulle of sighte. 32  
A fair feeld ful of folk  
Fond I ther bitwene,  
Of alle manere of men,  
The meene and the riche,  
Werchyng and wandryng,  
As the world asketh.

Some putten hem to the plough,  
Pleiden ful selde,  
In settyng and sowyng  
Swonken ful harde,  
And wonnen that wastours 43  
With glotony destruyeth.

And somme putten hem to pride,  
Apparailled hem therafter,  
In contenaunce of clothyng  
Comen degised.

In preires and penaunces  
Putten hem manye,  
Al for the love of oure Lord  
Lyveden ful streyte,  
In hope to have after  
Hevene riche blisse ; 54



As ances and heremites 55  
 That holden hem in hire selles,  
 And coveiten noght in contree  
 To carien aboute,  
 For no likerous liflode  
 Hire likame to plese.

And somme chosen chaffare ;  
 Thei cheveden the bettre,  
 As it semeth to our sight  
 That swiche men thryveth.

And somme murthes to make,  
 As mynstralles konne, 66  
 And geten gold with hire glee,  
 Giltles, I leeve.

Ac japeres and jangeleres,  
 Judas children,  
 Feynen hem fantasies,  
 And fooles hem maketh,  
 And han hire wit at wille  
 To werken, if thei wolde.  
 That Poul precheth of hem  
 I wol nat preve it here ;  
 But *Qui loquitur turpiloquium* 77  
 Is Luciferes hyne.

Bidderes and beggeres  
 Faste aboute yede,  
 With hire belies and hire bagges  
 Of breed ful y-crammed ;  
 Faiteden for hire foode,  
 Foughten at the ale.  
 In glotonye, God woot,  
 Go thei to bedde,  
 And risen with ribaudie,  
 Tho Roberdes knaves ; 88

Sleep and sory sleuthe      89  
Seweth hem evere.

Pilgrymes and palmeres  
Plighten hem togidere,  
For to seken seint Jame,  
And seintes at Rome.  
They wenten forth in hire wey,  
With many wise tales,  
And hadden leve to lyen  
Al hire lif after.

I seigh somme that seiden  
Thei hadde y-sought seintes ;      100  
To ech a tale that thei tolde  
Hire tonge was tempred to lye,  
Moore than to seye sooth,  
It semed bi hire speche.

Heremytes on an heep  
With hoked staves  
Wenten to Walsyngham,  
And hire wenches after,  
Grete lobies and longe  
That lothe were to swynke ;  
Clothed hem in copes,      111  
To ben knowen from othere ;  
And shopen hem heremytes,  
Hire ese to have.

I fond there freres,  
Alle the foure ordres,  
Prechyng the peple  
For profit of hemselfe ;  
Glosed the gospel,  
As hem good liked ;  
For coveitise of copes,  
Construwed it as thei wolde.      122

Many of thise maistre freres 123  
 Now clothen hem at likyng,  
 For hire moneie and hire marchaun-  
 Marchen togideres. [dize  
 For sith charité hath ben chapman,  
 And chief to shryve lordes,  
 Manye ferlies han fallen  
 In a fewe yeres ;  
 But holy chirche and hii  
 Holde bettre togidres,  
 The mooste meschief on molde  
 Is mountynge wel faste. 134

Ther preched a pardonere,  
 As he a preest were ;  
 Broughte forth a bulle  
 With many bisshopes seles,  
 And seide that hymself myghte  
 Assoillen hem alle,  
 Of falshede, of fastynge,  
 Of avowes y-broken.

Lewed men leved it wel,  
 And liked hise wordes ;  
 Comen up knelynge 145  
 To kissen hise bulles.  
 He bouched hem with his brevet,  
 And blered hire eighen,  
 And raughte with his rageman  
 Rynges and broches.

Thus thei gyven hire gold  
 Glotons to kepe,  
 And leveth in swiche losels  
 As leccherie haunten.

Were the bisshope y-blessed,  
 And worth bothe hise cris, 156

His seel sholde noght be sent 157  
To deceyve the peple.

Ac it is noght by the bisshope  
That the boy precheth ;  
For the parisshe preest and the par-  
Parten the silver, [doner  
That the poraille of the parisshe  
Sholde have, if thei ne were.

Parsons and parisshe preestes  
Pleynd hem to the bisshope,  
That hire parisshes weren povere  
Sith the pestilence tyme, 168  
To have a licence and leve  
At London to dwelle,  
And syngen ther for symonie ;  
For silver is swete.

Bisshopes and bachelers,  
Bothe maistres and doctours,  
That han cure under Crist,  
And crownynge in tokene  
And signe that thei sholden  
Shryven hire parissshens,  
Prechen and praye for hem, 179  
And the povere fede,  
Liggen at Londone  
In Lenten and ellis.

Somme serven the kyng,  
And his silver tellen  
In cheker and in chauncelrie,  
Chalangen hise dettes  
Of wardes and of wardemotes,  
Weyves and streyves.

And somme serven as servauntz  
Lordes and ladies, 190

And in stede of stywardes 191  
 Sitten and demen ;  
 Hire messe and hire matyns  
 And many of hire houres  
 Arn doon un-devoutliche ;  
 Drede is at the laste,  
 Lest Crist in consistorie  
 A-corse ful manye.

I perceyved of the power  
 That Peter hadde to kepe,  
 To bynden and unbynden,  
 As the book telleth ; 202  
 How he it lefte with love,  
 As oure Lord highte,  
 Amonges foure vertues,  
 The beste of alle vertues,  
 That cardinals ben called,  
 And closynge yates.  
 There is Crist in his kingdom  
 To close and to shette,  
 And to opene it to hem,  
 And hevene blisse shewe.

Ac of the cardinals at court 213  
 That kaughte of that name,  
 And power presumed in hem  
 A pope to make,  
 To han that power that Peter hadde,  
 Impugnen I nelle ;  
 For in love and in lettrure  
 The election bilongeth,  
 For-thi I kan and kan naught  
 Of court speke moore.

Thanne kam ther a kyng,  
 Knyghthod hym ladde, 224

Might of the communes 225  
Made hym to regne.

And thanne cam kynde wit,  
And clerkes he made,  
For to counseillen the kyng,  
And the commune save.

The kyng and knyghthod,  
And clergie bothe,  
Casten that the commune  
Sholde hemself fynde.

The commune contrevd  
Of kynde wit craftes, 236  
And for profit of al the peple  
Plowmen ordeyned,  
To tilie and to travaille,  
As trewe lif asketh.

The kyng and the commune,  
And kynde wit the thridde,  
Shopen lawe and leauté,  
Ech man to knowe his owene.

Thanne loked up a lunatik,  
A leene thyng with-alle,  
And, knelynge to the kyng, 247  
Clergially he seide :

“Crist kepe thee, sire kyng !  
And thi kyng-ryche,  
And lene thee lede thi lond,  
So leauté thee lovye,  
And for thi rightful rulyng  
Be rewarded in hevene.”

And sithen in the eyr an heigh  
An aungel of hevene  
Lowed to speke in Latyn,  
For lewed men ne koude 258



Jangle ne jugge, 259

That justifie hem sholde,

But suffren and serven ;

For-thi seide the aungel :

*Sum rex, sum princeps,*

*Neutrum fortasse deinceps ;*

*O qui jura regis*

*Christi specialia regis,*

*Hoc quod agas melius,*

*Justus es, esto pius.*

*Nudum jus a te*

*Vestiri vult pietate ;* 270

*Qualia vis metere,*

*Talia grana sere.*

*Si jus nudatur,*

*Nudo de jure metatur ;*

*Si seritur pietas,*

*De pietate metas.*

Thanne greved hym a goliardeis,

A gloton of wordes,

And to the aungel an heigh

Answerde after :

*Dum rex a regere* 281

*Dicatur nomen habere ;*

*Nomen habet sine re,*

*Nisi studet jura tenere.*

Thanne gan al the commune

Crye in vers of Latyn,

To the kynges counseil ;

Construe who so wolde :

*Præcepta regis*

*Sunt nobis vincula legis.*

With that ran ther a route

Of ratons at ones, 292

And smale mees myd hem      293  
 Mo than a thousand,  
 And comen to a counseil  
 For the commune profit ;  
 For a cat of a contree  
 Cam whan hym liked,  
 And overleep hem lightliche,  
 And laughte hem at his wille,  
 And pleide with hem perillousli,  
 And possed aboute.

“For doute of diverse dredes,  
 We dar noght wel loke ;      304  
 And if we grucche of his gamen,  
 He wol greven us alle,  
 Cracchen us or clawen us,  
 And in hise clouches holde,  
 That us lotheth the lif  
 Er he late us passe.  
 Mighte we with any wit  
 His wille withstonde,  
 We mighte be lordes o-lofte,  
 And lyven at oure ese.”

A raton of renoun,      315  
 Moost renable of tonge,  
 Seide for a sovereyn  
 Help to hymselfe :

“I have y-seyen segges,” quod  
 “In the cité of Londone,      [he  
 Beren beighes ful brighte  
 Abouten hire nekkes,  
 And somme colers of crafty werk ;  
 Uncoupled thei wenten  
 Bothe in wareyne and in waast  
 Where hemself liked.      326

And outhur while thei arn ellis-  
As I here telle ; [where,  
Were ther a belle on hire beighe,  
By Jhesu, as me thynketh,  
Men myghte witen wher thei wente,  
And away renne ! ”

“ And right so,” quod that raton,  
“ Reson me sheweth,  
To bugge a belle of bras,  
Or of bright silver,  
And knydden it on a coler  
For oure commune profit, 338  
Wher he ryt or rest,  
Or renneth to pleye ;  
And if hym list for to laiike,  
Thanne loke we mowen,  
And peeren in his presence  
The while him pleye liketh :  
And, if hym wratheth, be war,  
And his way shonye.”

Al this route of ratons  
To this reson thei assented.  
Ac tho the belle was y-brought, 349  
And on the beighe hanged,  
Ther ne was raton in al the route,  
For al the reaume of Fraunce,  
That dorste have bounden the belle  
About the cattes nekke,  
Ne hangen it aboute the cattes hals,  
Al Engelond to wyne.  
Alle helden hem un-hardy,  
And hir counseil feble ;  
And leten hire labour lost  
And al hire longe studie. 360

A mous that muche good      361  
 Kouthe, as me thoughte,  
 Strook forth sternely,  
 And stood bifore hem alle,  
 And to the route of ratons  
 Reherced thise wordes :

“Though we killen the cat,  
 Yet sholde ther come another  
 To cacchen us and al oure kynde,  
 Though we copen under benches.  
 For-thi I counseille al the commune  
 To late the cat worthe ;      372  
 And be we nevere bolde  
 The belle hym to shewe ;  
 For I herde my sire seyn,  
 Is seven yeer y-passed,  
 Ther the cat is a kitone  
 The court is ful elenge ;  
 That witnesseth holy writ,  
 Who so wole it rede :

*Væ terræ ubi puer rex est ! etc.*  
 For may no renk ther reste have  
 For ratons by nyghte ;      383  
 The while he caccheth conynges,  
 He coveiteth noght youre caroyne,  
 But fedeth hym al with venyson :  
 Defame we hym nevere.  
 For better is a litel los  
 Than a long sorwe,  
 The maze among us alle,  
 Theigh we mysse a sherewe ;  
 For many mennes malt  
 We mees wolde destruye,  
 And also ye route of ratons      394

Rende mennes clothes, 395  
Nere the cat of that court  
That can yow over-lepe ;  
For hadde ye rattes youre wille,  
Ye kouthe noght rule yow selve."

"I seye for me," quod the mous,  
"I se so muchel after,  
Shal nevere the cat ne the kiton  
By my counseil be greved,  
Thorugh carpynge of this coler  
That costed me nevere  
And though it hadde costned me  
Bi-knownen it I nolde, [catel,  
But suffren, as hymself wolde,  
To doon as hym liketh,  
Coupled and uncoupled  
To cacche what thei mowe.  
For-thi ech a wis wight I warne,  
Wite wel his owene."

What this metels by-meneth,  
Ye men that ben murye  
Devyne ye, for I ne dar,  
By deere God in hevene. 417

Yet hoved ther an hundred  
In howves of selk,  
Sergeantz it bi-semed  
That serveden at the barre,  
Pleteden for penyes  
And poundes the lawe ;  
And noght for love of our Lord  
Unclose hire lippes ones.  
Thow myghtest bettre meete myst  
On Malverne hilles,  
Than gete a mom of hire mouth,

Til moneie be shewed. 429

Barons and burgeises,  
And bonde-men als,  
I seigh in this assemblee,  
As ye shul here after :  
Baksteres and brewesteres,  
And bochiers manye ;  
Wollen webbesters,  
And weveres of lynnyn,  
Taillours and tynkers,  
And tollers in markettes,  
Masons and mynours, 440  
And many othere craftes.  
Of alle kynne lybbynge laborers  
Lopen forth somme,  
As dikes and delveres,  
That doon hire dedes ille,  
And dryveth forth the longe day  
With *Dieu save dame Emme*.

Cokes and hire knaves  
Cryden, "Hote pies, hote !  
Goode gees and grys !  
Gowe, dyne, gowe !" 451

Taverners until hem  
Trewely tolden the same,  
Whit wyn of Oseye,  
And reed wyn of Gascoigne,  
Of the Ryn and of the Rochel,  
The roost to defie.  
[Al this I saugh slepynge,  
And seve sithes more.] 459





*Passus Primus de Visione.*

**W**HAT this mountaigne by-  
meneth 460  
And the merke dale,  
And the feld ful of folk,  
I shal yow faire shewe.

A lovely lady of leere,  
In lynnyn y-clothed,  
Cam down from a castel  
And called me faire,  
And seide, "Sone, slepestow?  
Sestow this peple,  
How bisie thei ben  
Alle aboute the maze? 471  
The mooste partie of this peple  
That passeth on this erthe,  
Have thei worship in this world,  
Thei wilne no better;  
Of oother hevene than here  
Holde thei no tale."

I was a-fered of hire face,  
Theigh she fair weere,  
And seide, "Mercy, madame,  
What is this to meene?"

"The tour on the toft," quod she,  
"Truthe is therinne; 483

And wolde that ye wroughte,      484  
 As his word techeth !  
 For he is fader of feith,  
 And formed yow alle  
 Bothe with fel and with face,  
 And yaf yow fyve wittes,  
 For to worshiþe hym therwith,  
 While that ye ben here.  
 And therefore he highte the erthe  
 To helpe yow echone,  
 Of wollene, of lynnene,  
 Of lifode at nede,      495  
 In mesurable manere  
 To make yow at ese ;  
 And comaunded of his curteisie  
 In commune three thynges,  
 Are none nedfulle but tho,  
 And nempne hem I thynke,  
 And rekene hem by reson ;  
 Reherce thow hem after.

“ That oon vesture,  
 From cold thee to save ;  
 And mete at meel      506  
 For mysese of thiselwe ;  
 And drynke whan thow driest ;  
 Ac do noght out of reson,  
 That thow worthe the wers  
 Whan thow werche sholdest.

“ For Lot in hise lif-dayes,  
 For likynge of drynke,  
 Dide by hise doughtres  
 That the devel liked,  
 Delited hym in drynke  
 As the devel wolde,      517

And leccherie hym laughte, 518  
 And lay by hem bothe,  
 And al he witte it the wyn  
 That wikked dede.

*Inebriamus eum vino, dormiamusque  
 cum eo, ut servare possimus de  
 patre nostro semen.*

Thorough wyn and thorough wom-  
 Ther was Loth acombred, [men  
 And there gat in glotonie  
 Gerles that were cherles.

"For-thi dred delitable drynke,  
 And thow shalt do the bettre. 530  
 Mesure is medicine,  
 Though thow muchel yerne.  
 It is nought al good to the goost  
 That the gut asketh,  
 Ne liflode to thi likame;  
 For a liere hym techeth,  
 That is the wrecched world  
 Wolde thee bitraye.  
 For the fend and thi flesshe  
 Folwen togidere. 540

This and that seeth thi soule,  
 And seith it in thin herte;  
 And for thow sholdest ben y-war,  
 I wisse thee the beste."

"Madame, mercy!" quod I,  
 "Me liketh wel youre wordes;  
 Ac the moneie of this molde  
 That men so faste holdeth,  
 Tel me to whom, madame,  
 That tresour appendeth." 550

"Go to the gospel," quod she,

“ That God seide hymselfen ;      552  
 Tho the poeple hym apposed  
 With a peny in the temple,  
 Wheither thei sholde therwith  
 Worshiþe the kyng Cesar.

“ And God asked of hym,  
 Of whom spak the lettre,  
 And the ymage was lik  
 That therinne stondeth.

“ ‘ Cesares,’ thei seiden,  
 ‘ We seen it wel echone.’

“ ‘ *Reddite Cæsari,*’ quod God,      563  
 ‘ That *Cæsari* bifalleth,  
*Et quæ sunt Dei Deo,*  
 Or ellis ye don ille ;  
 For rightfully reson  
 Sholde rule yow alle,  
 And kynde wit be wardeyn  
 Youre welthe to kepe,  
 And tutour of youre tresor,  
 And take it yow at nede,  
 For housbondrie and hii  
 Holden togidres.”      574

Thanne I frayned hire faire,  
 For hym that me made,

“ That dongeon in the dale,  
 That dredful is of sighte,  
 What may it be to meene,  
 Madame, I yow biseche?”

“ That is the castel of Care ;  
 Who so comth therinne  
 May banne that he born was,  
 To bodi or to soule.

Therinne wonyeth a wight      585

That Wrong is y-hote, 586  
Fader of falshede,  
And founded it hymselfe.

Adam and Eve

He egged to ille ;

Counseilled Kaym

To killen his brother ;

Judas he japed

With Jewen silver,

And sithen on an eller

Hanged hymselfe.

He is lettere of love, 597

And lieth hem alle

That trusten on his tresour ;

Bitrayeth he hem sonnest."

Thanne hadde I wonder in my wit

What womman it weere,

That swiche wise wordes

Of holy writ shewed ;

And asked hire on the heighe name,

Er she thennes yede,

What she were witterly

That wissed me so faire. 608

"Holi chirche I am," quod she,

"Thow oughtest me to knowe ;

I underfeng thee first,

And the feith taughte ;

And broughtest me borwes

My biddyng to fulfille,

And to loven me leelly

The while thi lif dureth."

Thanne I courbed on my knees,

And cried hire of grace ;

And preide hire pitously 619

Preye for my sinnes, 620  
 And also kenne me kyndely  
 On Crist to bi-leve,  
 That I myghte werchen his wille  
 That wroghte me to man.  
 ‘ Teche me to no tresor,  
 But tel me this ilke,  
 How I may save my soule,  
 That seint art y-holden.”

“Whan alle tresors arn tried,”  
 “Treuthe is the beste ; [quod she,  
 I do it on *Deus caritas*, 631  
 To deme the sothe,  
 It is as dereworthe a drury  
 As deere God hymselfen.

“Who is trewe of his tonge,  
 And telleth noon oother,  
 And dooth the werkes therwith,  
 And wilneth no man ille,  
 He is a God by the gospel  
 A-grounde and o-lofte,  
 And y-lik to oure Lord,  
 By seint Lukes wordes. 642  
 The clerkes that knowen this,  
 Sholde kennen it aboute,  
 For cristen and un-cristen  
 Cleymeth it echone.

“Kynges and knyghtes  
 Sholde kepen it by reson,  
 Riden and rappen down  
 In reaumes aboute,  
 And taken *transgressores*,  
 And tyen hem faste,  
 Til treuthe hadde y-termyned 653



Hire trespas to the ende. 654  
And that is profession apertli  
That apendeth to knyghtes ;  
And naught to fasten o friday  
In fyve score wynter,  
But holden with hym and with here  
That wolden alle truthe,  
And nevere leve hem for love  
Ne for lacchyng of silver.  
For David in hise dayes  
Dubbed knyghtes,  
And dide hem sweren on hirswerdes  
To serven truthe evere ; 666  
And who so passed that point  
Was apostata in the ordre.

“But Crist kyngene kyng  
Knyghted ten,  
Cherubyn and seraphyn,  
Swiche sevene and othere  
And yaf hem myght in his majestee,  
The murier hem thoughte,  
And over his meene meynne  
Made hem archangeles ; 676  
Taughte hem by the Trinitee  
Treuthe to knowe ;  
To be buxom at his biddyng,  
He bad hem nought ellis.

“Lucifer with legions  
Lerned it in hevene ;  
But for he brak buxomnesse  
His blisse gan he tyne,  
And fel fro that felawshipe  
In a fendes liknesse,  
Into a deep derk helle, 687

To dwelle there for evere ;      688  
 And mo thousandes myd hym  
 Than man kouthe nombre  
 Lopen out with Lucifer  
 In lothliche forme,  
 For thei leveden upon hym  
 That lyed in this manere :

*Ponam pedem in aquilone, et similis  
 ero altissimo.*      [be so,

“ And alle that hoped it myghte  
 Noon hevene myghte hem holde,  
 But fellen out in fendes liknesse 699  
 Nyne dayes togideres,  
 Til God of his goodnesse  
 Gan stablisse and stynte,  
 And garte the hevene to stekie  
 And stonden in quiete.

“ Whan thise wikkede wenten out,  
 In wonder wise thei fellen ;  
 Somme in the eyr, somme in erthe,  
 And somme in helle depe ;  
 Ac Lucifer lowest lith  
 Yet of hem alle,      710

For pride that he putte out,  
 His peyne hath noon ende.  
 And alle that werchen with wrong,  
 Wende thei shulle,  
 After hir deth day  
 And dwelle with that sherewe.

“ And tho that werche wel,  
 As holy writ telleth,  
 And enden as I er seide  
 In truthe, that is the beste,  
 Mowe be siker that hire soules 721

Shul wende to hevene, 722  
 Ther treuthe is in trinitee,  
 And troneth hem alle.  
 For-thi I seye, as I seyde er,  
 By sighte of thise textes,  
 Whan alle tresors arn tried,  
 Truthe is the beste ;  
 Lereth it thise lewed men,  
 For lettred men it knoweth,  
 That treuthe is tresor  
 The trieste on erthe." [quod I,  
 "Yet have I no kynde knowyng,"  
 "Ye mote kenne me bettre, 734  
 By what craft in my cors  
 It comseth, and where."  
 "Thow doted daffe," quod she,  
 "Dulle are thi wittes ;  
 To litel Latyn thow lernedest,  
 Leode, in thi youthe."  
*Heumichi! quia sterilem duxi vitam*  
*juvenilem.* [she,  
 "It is a kynde knowyng," quod  
 "That kenneth in thyn herte, 744  
 For to loven thi Lord  
 Levere than thiselve,  
 No dedly synne to do,  
 Deye theigh thow sholdest ;  
 This I trowe be truthe.  
 Who kan teche thee bettre,  
 Loke thow suffre hym to seye,  
 And sithen lere it after ;  
 For truthe telleth that love  
 Is triacle of hevene.  
 May no synne be on hym seene, 755

That useth that spice, 756  
 And alle hise werkes be wroughte  
 With love as hym liste ;    [thyng,  
 And lered it Moyses for the leveste  
 And moost lik to hevene,  
 And al so the plentee of pees  
 Moost precious of vertues ;  
 For hevene myghte nat holden it,  
 It was so hevy of hymself,  
 Til it hadde of the erthe  
 Eten his fille.

“And whan it hadde of this fold 767  
 Flesshe and blood taken,  
 Was nevere leef upon lynde  
 Lighter thereafter,  
 And portatif and persaunt  
 As the point of a nedle,  
 That myghte noon armure it lette,  
 Ne none heighe walles.

“For-thi is love ledere 779  
 Of the Lordes folk of hevene,  
 And a meene, as the mair is [mune ;  
 Bitwene the kyng and the com-  
 Right so is love a ledere,  
 And the law shapeth,  
 Upon man for hise mysdedes  
 The mercymment he taxeth.  
 And for to knowen it kyndely  
 It comseth by myght,  
 And in the herte there is the heed  
 And the heighe welle ;  
 For in kynde knowynge in herte,  
 Ther a myght bigynneth ;  
 And that falleth to the fader 789

That formed us alle, 790  
 Loked on us with love,  
 And leet his sone dye  
 Mekely for oure mysdedes,  
 To amenden us alle.  
 And yet wolde he hem no wo  
 That wroughte hym that peyne,  
 But mekely with mouthe  
 Mercy bisoughte,  
 To have pité of that peple  
 That peyned hym to dethe.

“There myghtow sen ensample  
 In hymself oone, 802  
 That he was myghtful and meke,  
 And mercy gan graunte  
 To hem that hengen hym on heigh  
 And his herte thirled.

“For-thi I rede yow, riche,  
 Haveth ruthe of the povere ;  
 Though ye be myghtful to mote,  
 Beeth meke in youre werkes,  
 For the same mesures that ye mete,  
 Amys outhur ellis, 812  
 Ye shulle ben weyen therwith  
 Whan ye wenden hennes.

*Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis,  
 remetietur vobis.*

“For though ye be trewe of youre  
 And treweliche wyne, [tonge  
 And as chaste as a child  
 That in chirche wepeth,  
 But if ye loven leelly  
 And lene the povere,  
 Swich good as God yow sent 823

Goodliche parteth, 824  
 Ye ne have namoore merite  
 In masse nor in houres,  
 Than Malkyn of hire maydenhede  
 That no man desireth.

“For James the gentile  
 Jugged in hise bokes,  
 That feith withouten the feet  
 Is right no thyng worthi,  
 And as deed as a dore-tree,  
 But if the dedes folwe. 834  
*Fides sine operibus mortua est, etc.*

“For-thi chastité withouten charité  
 Worth cheyned in helle ;  
 It is as lewed as a lampe  
 That no light is inne.  
 Manye chapeleyns arn chaste,  
 Ac charité is aweye ;  
 Are no men avarouser than hii  
 Whan thei ben avaunced,  
 Unkynde to hire kyn,  
 And to alle cristene  
 Chewen hire charité, 846  
 And chiden after moore ;  
 Swiche chastité withouten charité  
 Worth cheyned in helle.

“Manye curatours kepen hem  
 Clene of hire bodies ;  
 Thei ben acombred with coveitise,  
 Thei konne noght doon it from hem,  
 So harde hath avarice  
 Y-hasped hem togideres ;  
 And that is no truthe of the Trinité,  
 But tricherie of helle, 857

And lernynge to lewed men 858  
The latter for to deele.

For-thi thise wordes  
Ben writen in the gospel,  
*Date, et dabitur vobis,*  
For I deele yow alle,  
And that is the lok of love,  
And leteth out my grace,  
To conforten the carefulle  
A-combred with synne.

“ Love is leche of lif,  
And next oure Lord selve, 869  
And also the graithe gate  
That goth into hevene ;  
For-thi I seye, as I seide  
Er by the textes,  
Whan alle tresors ben tried,  
Treuthe is the beste.

“ Now have I told thee what truthe  
That no tresor is bettre ; [is,  
I may no lenger lenge thee with,  
Now loke thee oure Lorde.” 879







*Passus Secundus de Visione, ut  
supra.*

**Y**ET I courbed on my knees,  
And cried hire of grace,  
And seide, "Mercy, madame,  
For Marie love of hevene,  
That bar that blisful barn

That boughte us on the rode,  
Kenne me by som craft  
To knowe the false."

"Loke up on thi left half,  
And lo where he stondeth !  
Bothe Fals and Favel,  
And hire feeres manye."

891

I loked on my left half,  
As the lady me taughte,  
And was war of a womman  
Worthiliche y-clothed,  
Purfiled with pelure  
The fyneste upon erthe,  
Y-corouned with a coroune,  
The kyng hath noon better ;  
Fetisliche hire fyngres  
Were fretted with gold wyr,  
And theron rede rubies  
As rede as any gleede,

903

And diamauundes of derrest pris, 904  
 And double manere saphires,  
 Orientals and ewages,  
 Envenymes to destroye.

Hire robe was ful riche,  
 Of reed scarlet engreyned,  
 With ribanes of reed gold  
 And of riche stones.  
 Hire array me ravysshed,  
 Swich richesse saugh I nevere ;  
 I hadde wonder what she was,  
 And whos wif she were. 915

“What is this womman,” quod I,  
 “So worthili atired ?”

“That is Mede the mayde,” quod  
 “Hath noyed me ful ofte, [she,  
 And y-lakked my lemman  
 That Leautee is hoten,  
 And bi-lowen hire to lordes  
 That lawes han to kepe.

“In the popes paleis  
 She is pryvee as myselve ;  
 But soothnesse wolde noght so, 926  
 For she is a bastarde ;  
 For fals was hire fader  
 That hath a fikel tonge,  
 And nevere sooth seide  
 Sithen he com to erthe ;  
 And Mede is manered after hym,  
 Right as kynde asketh  
*Qualis pater talis filius.*  
*Bonus arbor bonum fructum facit.*

“I oughte ben hyere than she,  
 I kam of a bettre ; 937

My fader the grete God is      933  
 And ground of alle graces,  
 So God withouten gynnyng,  
 And I his goode doughter,  
 And hath yeven me mercy  
 To marie with myselve,  
 And what man be merciful  
 And leelly me love,  
 Shal be my lord and I his leef  
 In the heighe hevene.

“And what man taketh Mede,  
 Myn heed dar I legge,      949  
 That he shal lese for hire love  
 A lappe of *caritatis*.

“How construeth David the king  
 Of men that taketh Mede,  
 And men of this moolde  
 That maynteneth truthe,  
 And how ye shul save yourself,  
 The sauter bereth witnesse :  
*Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo, etc.*      [married

“And now worth this Mede y-  
 Unto a maused sherewe,      961  
 To oon fals fikel tonge,  
 A fendes biyete ;  
 Favel thorough his faire speche  
 Hath this folk enchaunted,  
 And al is Lieres ledynge,  
 That she is thus y-wedded.

“To-morwe worth y-maked  
 The maydenes bridale,      [wilt,  
 And there myghtow witen, if thow  
 Whiche thei ben alle      971

That longen to that lordshipe, 972  
 The lasse and the moore.  
 Knowe hem there, if thow kanst,  
 And kepe thow thi tonge,  
 And lakke hem noght, but lat hem  
 Till leauté be justice, [worthe  
 And have power to punysshē hem,  
 Thanne put forth thi reson.  
 Now I bikenne thee Crist," quod  
 "And his clene moder, [she,  
 And lat no conscience acombte thee  
 For coveitise of Mede." 983

Thus lefte me that lady  
 Liggyng a-slepe ;  
 And how Mede was y-mariēd  
 In metels me thoughte,  
 That al the riche retenaunce  
 That regneth with the false,  
 Were boden to the bridale  
 On bothe two sides,  
 Of alle manere of men  
 The meene and the riche ;  
 To marien this mayde 994  
 Were many men assembled,  
 As of knyghtes and of clerkes,  
 And oother commune peple,  
 As sisours and somonours,  
 Sherreves and hire clerkes,  
 Bedelles and baillifs,  
 And brocours of chaffare,  
 Forgoers and vitailleurs,  
 And advokettes of the arches ;  
 I kan noght rekene the route  
 That ran aboute Mede. 1005

Ac Symonie and Cyvyllē,      1006  
 And sisours of courtes,  
 Were moost pryvee with Mede  
 Of any men, me thoughte.  
 Ac Favel was the firste  
 That fette hire out of boure,  
 And as a brocour broughte hire  
 To be with Fals enjoined.

Whan Symonye and Cyvyllē  
 Seighe hir bothe wille,  
 Thei assented, for silver,  
 To seye as bothe wolde.      1017

Thanneleep Liereforth, and seide,  
 "Lo here a chartre !"

That Gile with hise grete othes  
 Gaf hem togidere,  
 And preide Cyvyllē to see,  
 And Symonye to rede it.

Thanne Symonye and Cyvyllē  
 Stonden forth bothe,  
 And unfoldeth the feffement  
 That Fals hath y-maked,  
 And thus bigynnen thise gomes      1028  
 To greden ful heighe :

*Sciant præsentes et futuri, etc.*

Witeth and witnesseth,  
 That wonieth upon this erthe,  
 That Mede is y-mariēd  
 Moore for hire goodes  
 Than for any vertue or fairnesse,  
 Or any free kynde.  
 Falsnesse is fayn of hire,  
 For he woot hire riche ;  
 And Favel with his fikel speche      1039

Feffeth by this chartre, 1040  
To be princes in pride  
And poverte to despise,  
To bakbite and to bosten,  
And bere fals witnesse,  
To scorne and to scolde,  
And sclaudre to make,  
Unbuxome and bolde  
To breke the ten hestes.

And the erldom of Envy  
And Wrathe togideres,  
With the chastilet of Chestre, 1051  
And Chaterynge out of reson.

The countee of Coveitise,  
And alle the costes aboute,  
That is Usure and Avarice,  
Al I hem graunte,  
In bargaynes and in brocages,  
With al the burghe of Thefte,

And al the lordshipe of Leccherie  
In lengthe and in brede,  
As in werkes and in wordes,  
And in waitynges with eighes, 1062  
And in wedes and in wisshynges,  
And with ydel thoughtes,  
There as wil wolde  
And werkmanshipe fayleth.

Glotonye he gaf hem ek,  
And grete othes togidere,  
And al day to drynken  
At diverse tavernes,  
And there to jangle and jape,  
And jugge hir even cristen ;  
And in fastynge dayes to frete 1073

Er ful tyme were, 1074  
 And thanne to sitten and soupen  
 Til sleep hem assaille ;  
 And bredden as burghe swyn,  
 And bedden hem esily,  
 Til sleuthe and sleep  
 Sliken hise sydes, [hem so  
 And thanne wanhope to awaken  
 With no wil to amende,  
 For he leveth be lost,  
 This is hir laste ende. 1084

And thei to have and to holde,  
 And hire heires after,  
 A dwellynge with the devel,  
 And dampned be for evere,  
 With alle the appurtinaunces of  
     purgatorie  
 Into the pyne of helle.

Yeldynge for this thyng,  
 At one dayes tyme,  
 Hire soules to Sathan,  
 To suffre with hym peynes, 1095  
 And with hym to wonye with wo  
 While God is in hevene.

In witnesse of which thyng,  
 Wrong was the firste,  
 And Piers the pardoner  
 Of Paulynes doctrine,  
 Bette the bedel  
 Of Bokyngham shire,  
 Reynald the reve  
 Of Rutland sokene,  
 Maude the millere,  
 And many mo othere. 1107



In the date of the devel 1108  
This dede I ensele,  
By sighte of Sire Symonie  
And Cyvyles leeve.

Thanne tened hym Theologie,  
Whan he this tale herde ;  
And seide unto Cyvyle,  
“ Now sorwe mote thow have,  
Swiche weddynges to werche,  
To wrathe with truthe ;  
And er this weddyng be wroght,  
Wo thee bitide ! 1119

“ For Mede is muliere  
Of Amendes engendred,  
And God graunteth to gyve  
Mede to Truthe ;  
And thow hast gyven hire to agilour ;  
Now God gyve thee sorwe !  
Thi text telleth thee noght so,  
Truthe woot the sothe ;  
For *Dignus est operarius*  
His hire to have,  
And thow hast fest hire to Fals, 1130  
Fy on thi lawe !  
For al bi lesynges thow lyvest  
And lecherouse werkes.  
Symonye and thiself  
Shenden holi chirche ;  
The notaries and ye  
Noyen the peple ;  
Ye shul a-biggen it bothe,  
By God that me made !

“ Wel ye witen, wernardes,  
But if youre wit faille, 1141

That Fals is feithlees 1142  
And fikel in hise werkes,  
And was a bastarde y-bore  
Of Belsabubbes kynne ;  
And Mede is muliere,  
A maiden of goode,  
And myghte kisse the kyng  
For cosyn, and she wolde.

“For-thi wercheth by wisdom,  
And by wit also ;  
And ledeth hire to Londone,  
There it is y-shewed, 1153  
If any lawe wol loke  
Thei ligge togideres ;  
And though justices juggen hire  
To be joyned to Fals,  
Yet be war of weddyng ;  
For witty is Truthe,  
And Conscience is of his counseil,  
And knoweth yow echone,  
And if he fynde yow in defaute  
And with the false holde,  
It shal bi-sitte youre soules 1164  
Ful soure at the laste.”

Herto assenteth Cyvyle,  
Ac Symonye ne wolde,  
Til he hadde silver for his service,  
And also the notaries.

Thanne fette Favel forth  
Floryns ynowe,  
And bad Gile to gyven  
Gold al aboute,  
And namely to the notaries  
That hem noon ne faille, 1175

And feffe false witnesses 1176  
 With floryns ynowe,  
 " For thei may Mede a-maistrye,  
 And maken at my wille."

Tho this gold was y-gyve,  
 Gret was the thonkyng  
 To Fals and to Favel  
 For hire faire giftes,  
 And comen to conforten  
 From care the false,  
 And seiden, " Certes, sire,  
 Cessen shul we nevere, 1187  
 Til Mede be thi wedded wif  
 Thorugh wittes of us alle ;  
 For we have Mede a-maistried  
 With oure murie speche,  
 That she graunteth to goon,  
 With a good wille,  
 To London, to loken  
 If the lawe wolde  
 Juggen yow joyntly  
 In joie for evere."

Thanne was Falsnesse fayn, 1193  
 And Favel as blithe,  
 And leten somone alle segges  
 In shires aboute,  
 And bad hem alle be bown,  
 Beggars and othere,  
 To wenden with hem to Westmyn-  
 To wnesse this dede. [stre

Ac thanne cared thei for caples  
 To carien hem thider,  
 And Favel fette forth thanne  
 Foles ynowe, 1209

And sette Mede upon a sherreve  
Shoed al newe.

And Fals sat on a sisour,  
That softeli trotted ;  
And Favel on a flaterere  
Fetisly atired.

Tho hadde notaries none,  
Anoyed thei were,  
For Symonye and Cyvyll  
Sholde on hire feet gange.

Ac thanne swoor Symonye,  
And Cyvyll bothe, 1221  
That somonours sholde be sadeled  
And serven hem echone,  
And late apparaille thise provisours  
In palfreyes wise,  
Sire Symonye hymself  
Shal sitte upon hir bakkes.

“Denes and southdenes,  
Drawe yow togideres,  
Erchdekenes and officials,  
And alle youre registrers,  
Lat saddle hem with silver 1232  
Oure synne to suffre,  
As avoutrye and divorses,  
And derne usurie,  
To bere bisshopes aboute  
A-brood in visitynge.

“Paulynes pryvees  
For pleintes in consistorie,  
Shul serven myself  
That Cyvyle is nempned.

“And cart-sadle the commissarie,  
Oure cart shal he lede, 1243

And fecchen us vitailles. 1244  
At *Fornicatores*.

And maketh of Lyere a lang cart  
To leden alle thise othere,  
As freres and faitours,  
That on hire feet rennen."

And thus Fals and Favel  
Fareth forth togideres,  
And Mede in the middes,  
And alle thise men after.

I have no tome to telle  
The tail that hire folwed ; 1255  
Ac Gyle was for-goer,  
And gyed hem alle.

Sothnesse seigh hem wel,  
And seide but litel,  
And priked his palfrey,  
And passed hem alle,  
And com to the kynges court,  
And Conscience it tolde ;  
And Conscience to the kyng  
Carped it after. 1265

"Now, by Crist," quod the kyng,  
"And I cacche myghte  
Fals or Favel,  
Or any of hise feeris,  
I wolde be wroken of tho wrecches  
That wercheth so ille,  
And doon hem hange by the hals,  
And alle that hem maynteneth ;  
Shal nevere man of this molde  
Meynprise the leeste,  
But right as the lawe wol loke,  
Lat falle on hem alle." 1276

And comaunded a constable 1278  
 That com at the firste,  
 To attachen tho tyrauntz,  
 "For any thyng I hote,  
 And fettreth faste Falsnesse,  
 For any kynnes giftes,  
 And girdeth of Gyles heed,  
 And lat hym go no ferther;  
 And if ye lacche Lyere,  
 Lat hym noght ascapen  
 Er he be put on the pillory,  
 For any preyere, I hote; 1289  
 And bryngeth Mede to me  
 Maugree hem alle."

Drede at the dore stood,  
 And the doom herde,  
 And how the kyng comaunded  
 Constables and sergeauntz  
 Falsnesse and his felawshipe  
 To fettren and to bynden.

Thanne Drede wente wyghtliche,  
 And warned the False,  
 And bad hym fle for fere, 1300  
 And hise felawes alle.

Falsnesse for fere thanne  
 Fleigh to the ffreres,  
 And Gyle dooth hym to go,  
 A-gast for to dye;  
 Ac marchauntz metten with hym  
 And made hym abide,  
 And bi-shetten hym in hire shoppes  
 To shewen hire ware,  
 Apparailed hym as apprentice  
 The peple to serve. 1311

Lightliche Lyere 1312  
Leep away thanne,  
Lurkyng thorough lanes,  
To-lugged of manye.  
He was nowher welcome,  
For his manye tales,  
Over al y-honted,  
And y-hote trusse,  
Til pardoners hadde pité,  
And pulled hym into house.  
They wesshen hym and wiped hym,  
And wounden hym in cloutes, 1323  
And senten hym with seles  
On Sondayes to chirches,  
And yeven pardoun for pens  
Pounde-mele aboute.

Thanne lourede leches,  
And lettres thei sente,  
That he sholde wonye with hem  
Watres to loke.

Spycers speken with hym,  
To spien hire ware;  
For he kouthe of hir craft, 1334  
And knewe manye gommies.

And mynstrales and messagers  
Mette with hym ones,  
And helden hym an half-yeer  
And ellevene dayes.

Freres with fair speche  
Fetten hym pennies,  
And for knowynge of comeres  
Coped hym as a frere;  
Ac he hath leve to lepen out,  
As ofte as hym liketh, 1345



And is welcome whan he wile, 1346  
And woneth with hem ofte.

Alle fledden for fere,  
And flowen into hernes;  
Save Mede the mayde,  
Na-mo dorste abide.  
Ac trewely to telle,  
She trembled for drede,  
And ek wepte and wrong,  
Whan she was attached.

1355





*Passus Tertius de Visione, ut supra.*

**N**OW is Mede the mayde,  
And na-mo of hem alle,  
With bedeles and with  
baillies

Brought bifore the kyng.

The kyng called a clerk,

Kan I noght his name,

To take Mede the maide

And maken hire at ese.

"I shal assayen hire myself,

And soothliche appose,

What man of this moolde

That hire were levest.

1367

And if she werche bi wit,

And my wil folwe,

I wol forgyven hire this gilt,

So me God helpe ! "

Curteisly the clerk thanne,

As the kyng highte,

Took Mede bi the myddel

And broghte hire into chambre ;

And ther was murthe and mynstral-

Mede to plese. [cie,

They that wonyeth in Westmyn-  
stre

Worshipeth hire alle,

1380

Gentilliche with joye ; 1381  
The justices somme  
Busked hem to the bour  
Ther the burde dwellede,  
To conforten hire kyndely,  
By clergies leve ;  
And seiden, "Mourne noght, Mede,  
Ne make thow no sorwe ;  
For we wol wisse the kyng,  
And thi wey shape,  
To be wedded at thi wille,  
And wher thee leef liketh, 1392  
For al Consciencies cast  
Or craft, as I trowe."

Mildely Mede thanne  
Merciede hem alle  
Of hire grete goodnesse,  
And gaf hem echone  
Coupes of clene gold,  
And coppes of silver,  
Rynges with rubies,  
And riches manye ;  
The leeste man of hire meynee 1403  
A moton of golde.  
Than laughte thei leve  
Thise lordes at Mede.

With that comen clerkes  
To conforten hire the same,  
And beden hire be blithe ;  
"For we beth thyne owene,  
For to werche thi wille,  
The while thow myght laste."

Hendiliche heo thanne  
Bi-highte hem the same, 1414

To loven hem lelly, 1415  
And lordes to make,  
And in the consistorie at the court  
Do callen hire names ;  
“Shal no lewednesse lette  
The leode that I lovye,  
That he ne worth first avaunced ;  
For I am bi-knowen,  
There konnyng clerkes  
Shul klokke bi-hynde.”

Thanne cam ther a confessour,  
Coped as a frere ; 1426  
To Mede the mayde  
He meved thise wordes,  
And seide ful softly,  
In shrift as it were,  
“Theigh lewed men and lered men  
Hadde leyen by thee bothe,  
And Falsnesse hadde y-folwed thee  
Alle thise fifty wynter,  
I shal assoille thee myself  
For a seem of whete,  
And also be thi bedeman, 1437  
And bere wel thi message  
Amonges knyghtes and clerkes,  
Conscience to torne.”

Thanne Mede for hire mysdedes  
To that man kneled,  
And shrof hire of hire sherewed-  
Shamelees, I trowe ; [nesse,  
Tolde hym a tale,  
And took hym a noble,  
For to ben hire bedeman  
And hire brocour als. 1448

Thanne he assoiled hire soone,  
 And sithen he seide,  
 "We have a wyndow in werchyng  
 Wole sitten us ful hye,  
 Woldestow glaze that gable  
 And grave therinne thy name,  
 Syker sholde thi soule be  
 Hevene to have."

"Wiste I that," quod that wom-  
 "I wolde noght spare [man,  
 For to be youre frend, frere,  
 And faile yow nevere, 1460  
 While ye love lordes  
 That lecherie haunten,  
 And lakketh noght ladies  
 That loven wel the same.  
 It is freletee of flesshe,  
 Ye fynden it in bokes,  
 And a cours of kynde  
 Wherof we comen alle.  
 Who may scape sclaunder,  
 The scathe is soone amended ;  
 It is synne of the sevene 1471  
 Sonnest relessed.

Have mercy," quod Mede,  
 "Of men that it haunteth,  
 And I shal covere youre kirk,  
 Youre cloistre do maken,  
 Woves do whiten,  
 And wyndowes glazen,  
 Do peynten and portraye,  
 And paie for the makynge,  
 That every segge shal seye  
 I am suster of youre house." 1482

Ac God to alle good folk 1483  
 Swich gravynge defendeth,  
 To writen in wyndowes  
 Of hir wel dedes,  
 An aventure pride be peynted there,  
 And pomp of the world ;  
 For Crist knoweth thi conscience,  
 And thi kynde wille,  
 And thi cost and thi coveitise,  
 And who the catel oughte.

For-thi I lere yow, lordes,  
 Leveth swiche werkes ; 1494  
 To writen in wyndowes  
 Of youre wel dedes,  
 Or to greden after Goddes men  
 Whan ye dele doles,  
 On aventure ye have youre hire here,  
 And youre hevene als.  
*Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra.*

Lat noght thi left half  
 Late ne rathe  
 Wite what thow werchest  
 With thi right syde ; 1505  
 For thus by the gospel  
 Goode men doon hir almesse.

Maires and maceres,  
 That menes ben bitwene  
 The kyng and the comune  
 To kepe the lawes,  
 To punyssh on pillories  
 And pynyng-stooles,  
 Brewesters and baksters,  
 Bochiers and cokes,  
 For thise are men on this molde 1516

That moost harm wercheth      1517  
 To the povere peple  
 That percel-mele buggen ;  
 For thei enpoisone the peple  
 Pryveliche and ofte,  
 Thei richen thorough regratrie,  
 And rentes hem biggen,  
 With that the povere peple  
 Sholde putte in hire wombe.  
 For toke thei on trewely,  
 Thei tymbred nought so heighe,  
 Ne boughte none burgages,      1528  
 Be ye ful certeyne.

Ac Mede the mayde  
 The mair hath bi-sought  
 Of alle swiche selleris  
 Silver to take,  
 Or presentz withouten pens,  
 As pieces of silver,  
 Rynges or oother richesse,  
 The regratiers to mayntene ;  
 "For my love," quod that lady,  
 "Love hem echone,      1539  
 And suffre hem to selle  
 Som del ayeins reson."

Salomon the sage  
 A sermon he made,  
 For to amenden maires  
 And men that kepen lawes ;  
 And tolde hem this teme,  
 That I telle thynke,  
*Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum*  
*qui libenter accipiunt munera,*  
*etc.*      1550



Among thise lettrede leodes 1551  
This Latyn is to mene,  
That fir shal falle and brenne  
Al to bloo askes  
The houses and homes  
Of hem that desireth  
Yiftes or yeres-yeves  
By cause of hire offices.

The kyng fro the conseil cam,  
And called after Mede,  
And of sente hire as swithe  
With sergeauntz manye, 1562  
And broughte hire to boure  
With blisse and with joye.

Curteisly the kyng thanne  
Comsed to telle,  
To Mede the mayde  
He meveth thise wordes,  
“Unwittily, womman,  
Wroght hastow ofte,  
Ac worse wroghtestow nevere  
Than tho thow Fals toke.  
But I forgyve thee that gilt, 1573  
And graunte thee my grace ;  
Hennes to thi deeth day  
Do so na-moore.

“I have a knyght Conscience,  
Cam late fro biyonde ;  
If he wilneth thee to wif,  
Wiltow hym have ?”

“Ye, lord,” quod that lady,  
“Lord forbede it ellis !  
But I be holly at youre heste,  
Lat hange me soone.” 1584

And thanne was Conscience called  
 To come and appere  
 Bifore the kyng and his conseil,  
 As clerkes and othere.

Knelynge Conscience  
 To the kyng louted,  
 To wite what his wille were,  
 And what he do wolde.

“Woltow wedde this womman,”  
 “If I wole assente? [quod the kyng,  
 For she is fayn of thi felaweshipe,  
 For to be thi make.” 1596

Quod Conscience to the kyng,  
 “Crist it me forbede !  
 Er I wedde swich a wif,  
 Wo me bitide !  
 For she is frele of hire feith,  
 Fikel of hire speche,  
 And maketh men mysdo  
 Many score tymes ;  
 Trust of hire tresor  
 Bitrayeth ful manye.

“Wyves and widewes 1607  
 Wantonnes she techeth,  
 And lereth hem lecherie  
 That loveth hire giftes.  
 Youre fader she felled  
 Thorugh false biheste,  
 And hath enpoisoned popes,  
 And peired holy chirche.  
 Is noght a bettre baude,  
 By hym that me made !  
 Bitwene hevene and helle,  
 In erthe though men soughte. 1618

For she is tikel of hire tail, 1619  
And tale-wis of hire tonge ;  
As commune as a cartwey  
To ech a knave that walketh,  
To monkes, to mynstrales,  
To meseles in hegges.

“Sisours and somonours,  
Swiche men hire preiseth ;  
Sherreves of shires  
Were shent if she ne were ;  
For she dooth men lese hire lond  
And hire lif bothe ; 1630  
She leteth passe prisoners,  
And paieth for hem ofte,  
And gyveth the gailers gold  
And grotes togidres,  
To unfettre the fals  
Fle where hym liketh ;  
And taketh the trewe bi the top  
And tieth hem faste,  
And hangeth hem for hatrede  
That harm dide nevere.

“To be corsed in consistorie 1641  
She counteth noght a bene ;  
For she copeth the commissarie,  
And coteth hise clerkes.  
She is assoiled as soone  
As hireself liketh ;  
And may neigh as muche do  
In a monthe one,  
As youre secret seel  
In sixe score dayes.  
For she is pryvee with the pope,  
Provisours it knoweth ; 1652

For sire Symonie and hirselve 1653  
 Seleth hire bulles.

“She blesseth thise bisshopes,  
 Theigh thei be lewed ;  
 Provendreth persones,  
 And preestes maynteneth,  
 To have lemmans and lotebies  
 Alle hire lif daies,  
 And bryngeth forth barnes  
 Ayein forbode lawes.  
 Ther she is wel with the kyng,  
 Wo is the reaume ; 1664  
 For she is favourable to fals,  
 And de-fouleth truthe ofte.

“By Jhesus ! with hire jeweles  
 Youre justices she shendeth,  
 And lith ayein the lawe,  
 And letteth hym the gate,  
 That feith may noght have his forth,  
 Hire floryns go so thikke.  
 She ledeth the lawe as hire list,  
 And love-daies maketh,  
 And dothmen lese thorough hirelove,  
 That lawe myghte wynne  
 The maze for a mene man,  
 Though he mote hire evere.  
 Lawe is so lordlich  
 And looth to maken ende,  
 Withouten presentz or pens  
 She pleseth wel fewe.

“Barons and burgeises  
 She bryngeth in sorwe,  
 And al the comune in care  
 That coveiten lyve in truthe ; 1686

For clergie and coveitise 1687  
 She coupleth togidres.  
 This is the lif of that lady ;  
 Now Lord gyve hire sorwe !  
 And alle that maynteneth hire men,  
 Meschaunce hem bitide !  
 For povere men may have no power  
 To pleyne hem, though thei smerte.  
 Swich a maister is Mede  
 Among men of goode."

Thanne mournede Mede,  
 And mened hire to the kyng 1693  
 To have space to speke,  
 Spede if she myghte.

The kyng graunted hire grace,  
 With a good wille,  
 "Excuse thee, if thow kanst ;  
 I kan na-moore seggen.  
 For Conscience accuseth thee,  
 To congeien thee for evere."

"Nay, lord," quod that lady,  
 "Leveth hym the werse,  
 Whan ye witen witterly 1709  
 Wher the wrong liggeth.  
 Ther that meschief is gret,  
 Mede may helpe.  
 And thow knowest, Conscience,  
 I kam noght to chide  
 Ne deprave thi persone,  
 With a proud herte.

Wel thow woost, wernarde,  
 But if thow wolt gabbe,  
 Thow hast hanged on myn half  
 Ellevene tymes, 1720

And also griped my gold,      1721  
 Gyve it where thee liked ;  
 And whi thow wrathest thee now,  
 Wonder me thynketh.  
 Yet I may as I myghte  
 Menske thee with giftes,  
 And mayntene thi manhode  
 Moore than thow knowest.

“Ac thow hast famed me foule  
 Bifore the kyng here ;  
 For killed I nevere no kyng  
 Ne counseiled thereafter,      1732  
 Ne dide as thow demest  
 I do it on the kynge.

“In Normandie was he noght  
 Noyed for my sake ;  
 Ac thow thiself soothly  
 Shamedest hym ofte,  
 Crope into a cabane  
 For cold of thi nayles,  
 Wendest that wynter  
 Wolde han y-lasting evere,  
 And dreeddest to be ded      1743  
 For a dym cloude,  
 And hyedest homward  
 For hunger of thi wombe.

“Withouten pité, pilour,  
 Povere men thow robbedest ;  
 And bere hire bras at thi bak  
 To Caleis to selle,  
 Ther I lafte with my lord,  
 His lif for to save.  
 I made his men murye,  
 And mournynge lette ;      1754

I batred hem on the bak, 1755  
And boldede hire hertes,  
And dide hem hoppe for hope  
To have me at wille.

Hadde I ben marchal of his men,  
By Marie of hevene !  
I dorste have leyd my lif,  
And no lasse wedde,  
He sholde have be lord of that lond  
In lengthe and in brede,  
And also kyng of that kith  
His kyn for to helpe, 1766  
The leeste brol of his blood  
A barones piere.

“Cowardly thow, Conscience,  
Conseiledest hym thennes,  
To leven his lordshipe  
For a litel silver,  
That is the richeste reaume  
That reyn over-hoveth.

“It bi-cometh to a kyng  
That kepeth a reaume,  
To yeve mede to men, 1777  
That mekely hym serveth,  
To aliens and to alle men,  
To honouren hem with giftes ;  
Mede maketh hym bi-loved  
And for a man holden.

“Emperours and erles,  
And alle manere lordes,  
For giftes han yonge men  
To renne and to ryde.

“The pope and alle the prelates  
Presentz underfongen, 1788



And medeth men hemselven 1789  
To mayntene hir lawes.

“Sergeauntz for hire servyce,  
We seeth wel the sothe,  
Taken mede of hir maistres,  
As thei mowe acorde.

“Beggeres for hir biddynge,  
Bidden men mede.

“Mynstrales for hir myrthe,  
Mede thei aske.

“The kyng hath mede of his men,  
To make pees in londe. 1800

“Men that teche children,  
Craven after mede.

“Preestes that prechen the peple  
To goode, asken mede,  
And massepens and hire mete  
At the meel-tymes.

“Alle kynne craftes men  
Craven mede for hir prentices.

“Marchauntz and Mede  
Mote nede go togideres.  
No wight, as I wene, 1811  
Withouten mede may libbe.”

Quod the kyng to Conscience,  
“By Crist ! as me thynketh,  
Mede is well worthi  
The maistrie to have.”

“Nay,” quod Conscience to the  
And kneled to the erthe, [kyng,  
“Ther are two manere of medes,  
My lord, with youre leve.

“That oon God of his grace  
Graunteth in his blisse 1822

To tho that wel werchen, 1823

While thei ben here ;

The prophete precheth therof,

And putte it in the Sauter,

*Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo ?* [wones,

“ Lord, who shal wonye in thi

And with thyne holy seintes,

Or resten in thyne holy hilles ?

This asketh David ;

And David assoileth it hymself,

As the Sauter telleth. 1834

*Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur justitiam.*

“ Tho that entren of o colour,

And of one wille,

And han y-wroght werkes

With right and with reson ;

And he that useth noght

The lyf of usurie,

And enformeth povere men,

And pursueth truthe.

*Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, et munera super innoc. etc.* [cent,

“ And alle that helpen the inno-

And holden with the rightfule,

Withouten mede doth hem good,

And the truthe helpeth,

Swiche manere men, my lord,

Shul have this firste mede

Of God at a gret nede,

Whan thei gon hennes. [lees,

“ Ther is another mede mesure-



That Agag of Amalec, 1891  
And al his peple after,  
Sholden deye for a dede  
That doon hadde hire eldres.

“For-thi seide Samuel to Saul,  
‘God hymself hoteth  
Thee be buxom at his biddyng,  
His wil to fulfille ;  
Weend to Amalec with thyn oost,  
And what thow fyndest there sle it,  
Burnes and beestes  
Bren hem to dethe, 1902  
Widwes and wyves,  
Wommen and children,  
Moebles and un-moebles,  
And al thow myght fynde,  
Bren it, bere it noght away,  
Be it never so riche,  
For mede ne for monee,  
Loke thow destruye it,  
Spille it and spare it noght,  
Thow shalt spede the bettre.’

“And for he coveited hir catel,  
And the kyng spared,  
Forbar hym and his beestes bothe,  
As the Bible witnesseth,  
Oother wise than he was  
Warned of the prophete,  
God seide to Samuel  
That Saul sholde deye,  
And al his seed for that synne  
Shenfulliche ende.  
Swich a meschief Mede made  
Saul the kyng to have, 1924

That God hated hym for evere, 1925  
And alle hise heires after.

“The culorum of this cas  
Kepe I noght to telle,  
On aventure it noyed men,  
Noon ende wol I make,  
For so is this world went  
With hem that han power,  
That who so seith hem sothest  
Is sonnest y-blamed.

“Conscience knowe this,  
For kynde wit it me taughte, 1936  
That Reson shal regne  
And reaumes governe,  
And right as Agag hadde,  
Happe shul somme,  
Samuel shal sleen hym,  
And Saul shal be blamed,  
And David shal be diademed,  
And daunten hem alle ;  
And oon cristene kyng  
Kepen hem alle.

Shal na-moore Mede 1947  
Be maister, as she is nouthe ;  
Ac love and lowenesse  
And leautee togideres,  
Thise shul ben maistres on moolde,  
Truthe to save. [truthe,

“And who so trespasseth ayein  
Or taketh ayein his wille,  
Leauté shal don hym lawe,  
And no lif ellis ;  
Shall no sergeaunt for his service  
Were a silk howve, 1958

Ne no pelure in his cloke                    1959  
 For pledynge at the barre.  
 Mede of mysdoeres  
 Maketh manye lordes,  
 And over lordes lawes  
 Ruleth the reaumes.

“Ac kynde love shal come yit,  
 And conscience togideres,  
 And make of lawe a laborer;  
 Swich love shal arise,  
 And swich a pees among the peple,  
 And a perfit truthe,                    1970  
 That Jewes shul wene in hire wit,  
 And wexen wonder glade,  
 That Moyses or Messie  
 Be come into this erthe,  
 And have wonder in hire hertes  
 That men beth so trewe.

“Alle that beren baselarde,  
 Brood swerd or launce,  
 Ax outhur hachet,  
 Or any wepene ellis,  
 Shal be demed to the deeth,                    1981  
 But if he do it smythy  
 Into sikel or to sithe,  
 To shaar or to kultour;  
*Conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres,*  
*etc.*

“Ech man to pleye with a plow,  
 Pykoise or spade,  
 Spynne or sprede donge,  
 Or spille hymself with sleuthe.

“Preestes and persons  
 With *Placebo* to hunte,                    1992

And dyngen upon David 1933  
 Eche day til eve.  
 Huntynge or haukyng  
 If any of hem use,  
 His boost of his benefice  
 Worth by-nomen hym after.  
 Shal neither kyng ne knyght,  
 Constable ne meire,  
 Overlede the commune,  
 Ne to the court sompne,  
 Ne putte hem in panel  
 To doon hem plighte hir truthe ;  
 But after the dede that is doon  
 Oon doom shal rewarde,  
 Mercy or no mercy,  
 As truthe wole acorde. [court,  
     "Kynges court and commune  
 Consistorie and chapitle,  
 Al shal be but oon court,  
 And oon baron be justice.  
 Thanne worth Trewe-tonge a tidy  
 That tened me nevere ; [man,  
 Batailles shul none be, 2015  
 Ne no man bere wepene ;  
 And what smyth that any smytheth,  
 Be smyte therwith to dethe.  
*Non levabit gens contra gentem*  
     *gladium, etc.*  
 "And er this fortune falle,  
 Fynde men shul the worste,  
 By sixe sonnes and a shipe,  
 And half a shef of arwes,  
 And the myddel of a moone,  
 Shal make the Jewes to torne, 2026



And Sarzynes for that sighte 2027  
 Shul synge *Gloria in excelsis, etc.*  
 For Makometh and Mede  
 Mys-lappe shul that tyme,  
 For *melius est bonum nomen quam*  
*divitiæ multæ.*"

Al so wroth as the wynd  
 Weex Mede in a while,  
 "I kan no Latyn," quod she,  
 "Clerkes wite the sothe ;  
 Se what Salomon seith  
 In Sapience bokes, 2038  
 That thei that gyven giftes  
 The victorie wynneth,  
 And moost worshipe hadde ther  
 As holy writ telleth : [with  
*Honorem adquirit qui dat munera,*  
*etc.*" [science,

"Leve wel, lady," quod Con-  
 "That thi Latyn be trewe ;  
 Ae thow art lik a lady  
 That radde a lesson ones,  
 Was *omnia probate,* 2049  
 And that plesed hire herte ;  
 For that lyne was no lenger  
 At the leves ende.  
 Hadde she loked that oother half,  
 And the leef torned,  
 She sholde have founden fele wordes  
 Folwyng thetherafter,  
*Quod bonum est tenete ;*  
 Truthe that text made.  
 And so ferde ye, madame,  
 Ye kouthe na-moore fynde, 2060

Tho ye loked on Sapience 2061  
 Sittyng in youre studie.  
 This text that ye han told  
 Were good for lordes ;  
 Ac yow fayled a konnyng clerk  
 That kouthe the leef han torned.  
 And if ye seche Sapience eft,  
 Fynde shul ye that folweth,  
 A ful teneful text  
 To hem that taketh mede ;  
 And that is *animam autem aufert*  
                   *accipientium, etc.,* 2072  
 And that is the tail of the text ;  
 Of that that she shewed,  
 That theigh we wynne worshiþe,  
 And with mede have victorie,  
 The soule that the sonde taketh  
 By so muche is bounde." 2078





*Passus Quartus de Visione, ut  
supra.*

**C**ESSETH," seith the kyng,  
"I suffre yow no lenger ;  
Ye shul saughtne for sothe,  
And serve me bothe.

Kis hire," quod the kyng,  
"Conscience, I hote." [science,

"Nay, by Crist !" quod Con-

"Congeye me er for evere,

But Reson rede me therto,

Rather wol I deye." [the kyng,

"And I comaunde thee," quod

To Conscience thanne,

"Rape thee to ryde, 2091

And Reson thow fecche ;

Comaunde hym that he come

My counseil to here,

For he shal rule my reaume

And rede me the beste,

And acounte with thee, Conscience,

So me Crist helpe !

How thow lernest the peple,

The lered and the lewed."

"I am fayn of that foreward,"

Seide the freke thanne, 2102

And ryt right to Reson, 2103  
 And rouneth in his ere,  
 And seide as the kyng bad,  
 And sithen took his leve.

“ I shal arraye me to ryde,” quod  
 “ Reste thee a while.” [Reson,  
 And called Caton his knave,  
 Curteis of speche,  
 And also Tomme Trewe-tonge,—  
 “ Tel me no tales,  
 Ne lesynge to laughen of,  
 For I loved hem nevere ; 2114  
 And set my sadel upon Suffre,  
 Til I se my tyme,  
 And lat warroke hym wel  
 With witty-wordses gerthes,  
 And hange on hym the hevy brydel  
 To holde his heed lowe,  
 For he wol make ‘ wehee ! ’  
 Twies er he be there.”

Thanne Conscience upon his  
 Carieth forth faste, [capul  
 And Reson with hym ryt, 2125  
 Rowynyng togideres,  
 Whiche maistries Mede  
 Maketh on this erthe.

Oon Waryn Wisdom,  
 And Witty his feere,  
 Folwed hym faste,  
 For thei hadde to doone [rye,  
 In th’escheker and in the chaunce-  
 To ben discharged of thynges ;  
 And riden faste, for Reson sholde  
 Rede hem the beste, 2136

For to save hem for silver 2137  
 From shame and from harmes.  
 And Conscience knew hem wel,  
 Thei loved coveitise ;  
 And bad Reson ryde faste,  
 And recche of hir neither.  
 "Ther are wiles in hire wordes,  
 And with Mede thei dwelleth ;  
 Ther as wrathe and wranglynge is,  
 Ther wyne thei silver ;  
 Ac where is love and leautee,  
 Thei wol noght come there. 2148  
*Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum,*  
*etc.*

"Thei ne yeveth noght of God  
 One goose wynges.  
*Non est timor Dei ante oculos*  
*eorum, etc.*

"For woot God thei wolde do  
 For a dozeyne chicknes, [moore  
 Or as manye capons,  
 Or for a seem of otes,  
 Than for the love of oure Lord, 2159  
 Or alle hise leewe seintes.  
 For-thi Reson lat hem ride,  
 Tho riche by hemselfe,  
 For Conscience knoweth hem noght,  
 Ne Crist, as I trowe."  
 And thanne Reson rood faste  
 The righte heighe gate,  
 As Conscience hym kenned,  
 Til thei come to the kynges.

Curteisly the kyng thanne  
 Com ayeins Reson, 2170

And bitwene hymself and his sone  
 Sette hym on benche;  
 And wordeden wel wisely  
 A gret while togideres.

And thanne com Pees into par-  
 And putte forth a bille, [lement,  
 How Wrong ayeins his wille  
 Hadde his wif taken,  
 And how he ravysshede Rose  
 Reginaldes loove,  
 And Margrete of hir maydenhede  
 Maugree hire chekes.

2182

“Bothe my gees and my gryns  
 Hise gadelynges feccheth,  
 I dar noght for fere of hem  
 Fighte ne chide.

He borwed of me Bayard,  
 He broughte hym hom nevere,  
 Ne no ferthyng therfore,  
 For ought I koude plede.  
 He maynteneth hise men  
 To murthere myne hewen,

Forstalleth my feires,

2193

And fighteth in my chepyng,  
 And breketh up my bernies dore,  
 And bereth away my whete,  
 And taketh me but a taillé  
 For ten quarters of otes;  
 And yet he beteth me therto,  
 And lyth by my mayde.  
 I am noght hardy for hym  
 Unnethe to loke.”

The kyng knew he seide sooth,  
 For Conscience hym tolde

2204

That Wrong was a wikked luft, 2205  
And wroghte muche sorwe.

Wrong was afered thanne,  
And Wisdom he soughte,  
To maken pees with hise pens ;  
And profred hym manye,  
And seide, "Hadde I love of my lord  
Litel wolde I recche, [the kyng,  
Theigh Pees and his power  
Pleynded hym evere."

Tho wente Wisdom  
And sire Waryn the Witty, 2216  
For that Wrong hadde y-wroght  
So wikked a dede,  
And warnede Wrong tho  
With swich a wis tale,  
"Who so wercheth by wille,  
Wrathe maketh ofte ;  
I sey it by myself,  
Thow shalt it wel fynde ;  
But if Mede it make,  
Thi meschief is uppe,  
For bothe thi lif and thi lond 2227  
Lyth in his grace."

Thanne wowede Wrong  
Wisdom ful yerne,  
To maken pees with his pens,  
Handy dandy payed.

Wisdom and Wit thanne  
Wenten togidres,  
And token Mede myd hem  
Mercy to wyne.

Pees putte forth his heed,  
And his panne bloody, 2238

“Withouten gilt, God it woot, 2239  
 Gat I this scathe ;  
 Conscience and the commune  
 Knowen the sothe.”

Ac Wisdom and Wit  
 Were aboute faste,  
 To overcomen the kyng  
 With catel, if thei myghte.

The kyng swor by Crist,  
 And by his crowne bothe,  
 That Wrong for hise werkes  
 Sholde wo tholie ; 2250  
 And comaundede a constable  
 To casten hym in irens,  
 And lete hym noght thise seven yer  
 Seen his feet ones.

“God woot,” quod Wisdom,  
 “That were noght the beste ;  
 And he amendes nowe make,  
 Lat maynprise hym have,  
 And be borch for his bale,  
 And buggen hym boote,  
 And so amenden that is mys-do 2261  
 And evere moore the bettre.”

Wit acorded therwith,  
 And seide the same,  
 “Bettre is that boote  
 Bale a-doun brynge,  
 Than bale be y-bet,  
 And boote never the bettre.”

And thanne gan Mede to mengen  
 And mercy she bi-soughte, [hire,  
 And profrede Pees a present  
 Al of pure golde : 2272



“Have this, man, of me,” quod she,  
 “To amenden thi scathe,  
 For I wol wage for Wrong  
 He wol do so na-moore.”

Pitously Pees thanne  
 Preyde to the kynge,  
 To have mercy on that man  
 That mys-dide hym so ofte ;  
 “For he hath waged me wel,  
 As Wisdom hym taughte,  
 And I forgyve hym that gilt  
 With a good wille, 2284  
 So that the kyng assente,  
 I kan seye no bettre ;  
 For Mede hath me amendes maad,  
 I may na-moore axe.”

“Nay,” quod the kyng tho,  
 “So me Crist helpe !  
 Wrong wendeth noght so a-wey,  
 Erst wole I wite moore.  
 For lope he so lightly,  
 Laughen he wolde ;  
 And eft the boldere be 2295  
 To bete myne hewen ;  
 But Reson have ruthe on hym,  
 He shal reste in my stokkes ;  
 And that as longe as he lyveth,  
 But lownesse hym borwe.”

Som men radde Reson tho  
 To have ruthe on that shrewe,  
 And for to counseille the kyng,  
 And Conscience after ;  
 That Mede moste be maynpernour  
 Reson thei bi-soughte. 2306

“Reed me noght,” quod Reson,  
 “No ruthe to have,  
 Til lordes and ladies  
 Loven alle truthe,  
 And haten alle harlotrie,  
 To heren or to mouthen it.

“Til Parnelles purfille  
 Be put in hire hucche,  
 And childrene cherissyng  
 Be chastyng with yerdes,  
 And harlottes holynesse  
 Be holden for an hyne.      2318

“Til clerkene coveitise be  
 To clothe the povere and fede,  
 And religiouse romeris  
*Recordare* in hir cloistres,  
 As seynt Beneyt hem bad,  
 Bernard and Fraunceis,  
 And til prechours prechyng  
 Be preved on hemselfe.

“Til the kynges counseil  
 Be the commune profit,  
 Til bisshopes bayardes      2329  
 Ben beggeris chaumbres,  
 Hire haukes and hire houndes  
 Help to povere religious.

“And til seint James be sought  
 There I shal assigne,  
 That no man go to Galis  
 But if he go for evere ;—  
 And alle Rome renneres,  
 For robberes biyonde,  
 Bere no silver over see  
 That signe of kyng sheweth,      2340

Neither grave ne ungrave, 2341  
 Gold neither silver,  
 Upon forfeiture of that fee,  
 Who so fynt it at Dovere,  
 But if he be marchaunt or his man,  
 Or messenger with lettres,  
 Provysour or preest,  
 Or penaunt for hise synnes.

“And yet,” quod Reson, “by the  
 I shal no ruthe have, [Rode !  
 While Mede hath the maistrie  
 In this moot-halle. 2352

Ac I may shewe ensamples,  
 As I se outhur while,  
 I seye it by myself,” quod he,  
 “And it so were  
 That I were kyng with coroune  
 To kepen a reaume,  
 Sholde nevere Wrong in this world,  
 That I wite myghte,  
 Ben unpunysshed in my power,  
 For peril of my soule,  
 Ne gete my grace for giftes, 2363  
 So me God save !

Ne for no mede have mercy,  
 But mekenesse it make ;  
 For *nullum malum* the man  
 Mette with *inpunitum*,  
 And bad *nullum bonum*  
 Be *irremuneratum*.

“Lat youre confessour, sire kyng,  
 Construe this unglosed ;  
 And if ye werchen it in werk,  
 I wedde myne eris, 2374

That lawe shal ben a laborer      2375  
 And lede a-feld donge,  
 And love shal lede thi lond,  
 As the leef liketh."

Clerkes that were confessours  
 Coupled hem togideres,  
 Al to construe this clause,  
 And for the kynges profit,  
 Ac noght for confort of the com-  
 Ne for the kynges soule; [mune,  
 For I seigh Mede in the moot-halle  
 On men of lawe wynke,      2386  
 And thei laughynge lope to hire,  
 And left Reson manye.

Waryn Wisdom  
 Wynked upon Mede,  
 And seide, "Madame, I am youre  
 What so my mouth jangle; [man,  
 I falle in floryns," quod that freke,  
 "And faile speche ofte."

Alle rightfulle recordede  
 That Reson truthe tolde;  
 And Wit acorded therwith,      2397  
 And comendede hise wordes,  
 And the mooste peple in the halle,  
 And manye of the grete,  
 And leten Mekenesse a maister,  
 And Mede a mansed sherewe.

Love leet of hire light,  
 And leauté yet lasse,  
 And seiden it so heighe  
 That al the halle it herde,  
 "Who so wilneth hire to wif,  
 For welthe of hire goodes,      2408

But he be knowe for a cokewold, 2409  
Kut of my nose."

Mede mornede tho,  
And made hevy chere,  
For the mooste commune of that  
Called hire an hore. [court  
Ac a sisour and a somonour  
Sued hire faste,  
And a sherreves clerk  
Bisherewed at the route ;  
"For ofte have I," quod he,  
"Holpen yow at the barre, 2420  
And yet yeve ye me nevere  
The worth of a risshe."

The kyng callede Conscience,  
And afterward Reson,  
And recordede that Reson  
Hadde rightfully shewed ;  
And modiliche upon Mede  
With myght the kyng-loked ;  
And gan wexe wroth with lawe,  
For Mede almoost hadde shent it ;  
And seide, "thorough lawe, as I  
I lese manye eschetes ; [leve !  
Mede overmaistreth lawe,  
And muche Truthe letteth.  
Ac Reson shal rekene with yow,  
If I regne any while,  
And deme yow bi this day,  
As ye han deserved.  
Mede shal noght maynprise yow,  
By the Marie of hevene !  
I wole have leauté in lawe,  
And lete be al youre janglyng ; 2442

And as moost folk witnesseth wel, <sup>2443</sup>  
Wrong shal be demed."

Quod Conscience to the kyng,  
"But the commune wole assente,  
It is ful hard, by myn heed!  
Hertoo to brynge it,  
Alle youre lige leodes  
To lede thus evene." [rode!"]

"By hym that raughte on the  
Quod Reson to the kyng,  
"But if I rule thus youre reaume,  
Rende out my guttes, <sup>2454</sup>  
If ye bidden buxomnesse  
Be of myn assent."

"And I assente," seith the kyng,  
"By seinte Marie my lady!  
By my counseil commune,  
Of clerkes and of erles;  
Ac redily, Reson,  
Thow shalt noght ride fro me,  
For, as longe as I lyve,  
Lete thee I nelle."

"I am al redy," quod Reson,  
"To reste with yow evere;  
So Conscience be of oure counseil,  
I kepe no bettere."

"And I graunte," quod the kyng,  
"Goddess forbode ellis!  
Als longe as oure lyf lasteth,  
Lyve we togideres." <sup>2472</sup>



*Passus Quintus de Visione, ut  
supra.*

**T**HE kyng and hise knyghtes  
To the kirke wente,  
To here matyns of the day  
And the masse after.

Thanne waked I of my wynkyng,  
And wo was withalle,  
That I ne hadde slept sadder,  
And y-seighen moore.  
Ac er I hadde faren a furlong,  
Feyntise me hente,  
That I ne myghte ferther a foot  
For defaute of slepyng,  
And sat softely a-down, 2485  
And seide my bileve,  
And so I bablede on my bedes,  
Thei broughte me a-slepe.  
And thanne saugh I mucche moore  
Than I bifore of tolde,  
For I seigh the feld ful of folk,  
That I bifore of seide,  
And how Reson gan arayen hym  
Al the reaume to preche,  
And with a cros afore the kyng  
Comsede thus to techen. 2496

He preved that thise pestilences  
 Were for pure synne,  
 And the south-westrene wynd  
 On Saterdag at even  
 Was pertliche for pure pride,  
 And for no point ellis ;  
 Pyries and plum-trees  
 Were puffed to the erthe,  
 In ensauple that the segges  
 Sholden do the better ;  
 Beches and brode okes  
 Were blowen to the grounde,      2508  
 Turned upward hire tailles,  
 In tokenynge of drede  
 That dedly synne er domes-day  
 Shal for-doon hem alle.

Of this matere I myghte  
 Mamelen ful longe ;  
 Ac I shal seye as I saugh,  
 So me God helpe !  
 How pertly afore the peple  
 Reson bigan to preche.

He bad Wastour go werche,      2519  
 What he best kouthed,  
 And wynnen his wastyng  
 With som maner crafte.

He preide Pernele  
 Hir purfil to lete,  
 And kepe it in hire cofre  
 For catel at hire nede.

Tomme Stowne he taughte  
 To take two staves,  
 And fecche Felice hom  
 Fro the wynen pyne.      2530



He warnede Watte 2531  
 His wif was to blame,  
 For hire heed was worth half marc,  
 And his hood noght worth a grote ;  
 And bad Bette kutte  
 A bough outhere tweye,  
 And bete Beton therwith,  
 But if she wolde werche.

And thanne he chargede chapmen  
 To chastizen hir children,  
 Late no wynnyng hem for-wanye  
 While thei be yonge, 2542  
 Ne for no poustee of pestilence  
 Plese hem noght out of reson.

“My sire seide so to me,  
 And so dide my dame,  
 That the levere child  
 The moore loore bihoveth ;  
 And Salomon seide the same,  
 That *Sapience* made,  
*Qui parcit virgæ, odit filium.*  
 The Englissh of this Latyn is,  
 Who so wole it knowe 2553  
 Who so spareth the spring,  
 Spilleth hise children.”

And sithen he prechede prelates  
 And preestes togideres,  
 “That ye prechen to the peple,  
 Preve it on yowselve,  
 And dooth it in dede,  
 It shal drawe yow to goode ;  
 If ye leven as ye leren us,  
 We shul leve yow the bettre.”

And sithen he radde Religion 2564

Hir rule to holde ; 2565  
 “Lest the kyng and his conseil  
 Youre comunnes apeire,  
 And be stywardes of youre stedes,  
 Til ye be ruled better.”

And sithen he counseiled the kyng  
 His commune to love ;  
 “It is thi trewe tresor,  
 And tryacle at thy nede.”

And sithen he preide the pope  
 Have pité on holy chirche,  
 And er he gyve any grace, 2576  
 Gouverne first hymselfe.

“And ye that han lawes to kepe,  
 Lat truthe be youre coveitise,  
 Moore than gold outhir giftes,  
 If ye wol God plese ;  
 For who so contrarieth Truthe,  
 He telleth in the gospel,  
 That God knoweth hym noght,  
 Ne no seynt of hevene.

*Amen dico vobis, nescio vos.*

“And ye that seke seynt James,  
 And seyntes of Rome,  
 Seketh seynt Truthe,  
 For he may save yow alle ;  
*Qui cum patre et filio,*  
 That faire hem bi-falle  
 That seweth my sermon.”  
 And thus seyde Reson.

Thanne ran Repentaunce,  
 And reherced his teme ;  
 And garte Wille to wepe  
 Water with hise eighen. 2598

Pernele Proud-herte 2599  
 Platte hire to the erthe,  
 And lay longe er she loked,  
 And "Lord, mercy !" cryde,  
 And bi-highte to hym  
 That us alle made,  
 She sholde unsowen hir serk,  
 And sette there an heyre,  
 To affaiten hire flesshe  
 That fiers was to synne.  
 "Shal nevere heigh herte me hente,  
 But holde I wole me lowe 2610  
 And suffre to be mys-seyd,  
 And so dide I nevere ;  
 And now I wole meke me,  
 And mercy biseche,  
 For al this I have  
 Hated in myn herte."

Thanne Lechour seide, "Allas !"  
 And on oure Lady he cryde,  
 To maken mercy for hise mys-dedes  
 Bitwene God and his soule ;  
 With that he sholde the Saterday,  
 Seven yer therafter,  
 Drynke but myd the doke,  
 And dyne but ones.

Envy with hevy herte  
 Asked after shrifte,  
 And carefully *mea culpa*  
 He comsed to shewe.  
 He was as pale as a pelet,  
 In the palsy he semed ;  
 And clothed in a kaurymaury,  
 I kouthe it nought discryve, 2632

In kirtel and courtepy, 2633  
 And a knyf by his syde ;  
 Of a freres frokke  
 Were the fore-sleves ;  
 And as a leek that hadde y-leye  
 Longe in the sonne,  
 So loked he with lene chekes  
 Louryng foule.

His body was to-bollen for wrathe,  
 That he boot hise lippes ;      [fust,  
 And wryngyng he yede with the  
 To wreke hymself he thoughte 2644  
 With werkes or with wordes,  
 Whan he seyge his tyme.  
 Ech a word that he warpe  
 Was of a neddres tonge ;  
 Of chidyng and of chalangyng  
 Was his chief liflode,  
 With bakbityng and bismere,  
 And beryng of fals witesse.

“I woldeben y-shryve,” quod this  
 “And I for shame dorste ; [sherewe,  
 I wolde be gladder, by God ! 2655  
 That Gybbe hadde meschaunce,  
 Than though I hadde this wouke y-  
 A weye of Essex chese.      [wonne

“I have a neghebore by me,  
 I have anoyed hym ofte,  
 And lowen on hym to lordes  
 To doon hym lese his silver,  
 And maad his frendes be his foon  
 Thorugh my false tonge ;  
 His grace and his goode happes  
 Greven me ful soore. 2666

“Bitwene manye and manye 2667  
I make debate ofte,  
That bothe lif and lyme  
Is lost thorough my speche.  
And whan I mete hym in market  
That I moost hate,  
I hailse hym hendely,  
As I his frend were ;  
For he is doughtier than I,  
I dar do noon oother ;  
Ac hadde I maistrie and myght,  
God woot my wille ! 2678

“And whan I come to the kirk,  
And sholde knele to the roode,  
And preye for the peple  
As the preest techeth,  
For pilgrymes and for palmeres,  
For al the peple after,  
Thanne I crye on my knees  
That Crist gyve hem sorwe,  
That beren away my bolle  
And my broke shete.

“Awey fro the auter thanne 2689  
Turne I myne eighen,  
And bi-holde Eleyne  
Hath a newe cote ;  
I wisshe thanne it were myn,  
And al the web after.

“And of mennes lesynge I laughe,  
That liketh myn herte ;  
And for hir wynnynge I wepe,  
And waille the tyme ;  
And deme that thei doon ille,  
There I do wel werse. 2700

Who so under-nymeth me hero 2701  
 I hate hym dedly after ;  
 I wolde that ech a wight  
 Were my knave,  
 For who so hath moore than I,  
 Than angreth me soore.  
 And thus I lyve love-lees,  
 Lik a luther dogge ;  
 That al my body bolneth,  
 For bitter of my galle.

“I myghte noght ete many yeres  
 As a man oughte, 2712  
 For envye and yvel wil  
 Is yvel to defie.

May no sugre ne swete thyng  
 Aswage my swellyng?

Ne no *diapenidion*

Dryve it fro myn herte?

Ne neither shrifte ne shame,

But who so shrape my mawe?”

“Yis redily,” quod Repentaunce,  
 And radde hym to the beste,

“Sorwe of synnes 2723  
 Is savacion of soules.”

“I am sorry,” quod that segge,  
 “I am but selde oother,  
 And that maketh me thus megre,  
 For I ne may me venge.

“Amonges burgeises have I be  
 Dwellyng at Londone,  
 And gart bakbityng be a brocour  
 To blame mennes ware ;  
 Whan he solde and I nought,  
 Thanne was I redy 2734

To lye and to loure on my neghebore,  
And to lakke his chaffare ;  
I wole amende this, if I may,  
Thorugh myght of God almyghty."

Now awaketh Wrathe,  
With two white eighen ;  
And nevelynge with the nose,  
And his nekke hangyng.

"I am Wrathe," quod he,  
"I was som tyme a frere,  
And the coventes gardyner  
For to graffen impes ; 2746  
On lymytours and listres  
Lesynges I ymped,  
Til thei beere leves of lowe speche,  
Lordes to plese,  
And sithen thei blosmede a-brood  
In boure to here shriftes ;  
And now is fallen therof a fruyt,  
That folk han wel levere  
Shewen hire shriftes to hem,  
Than shryve hem to hir persons.

"And now persons han perceyved  
That freres parte with hem,  
Thise possessioners preche  
And deprave freres.

"And freres fyndeth hem in de-  
As folk bereth witnesse, [faute,  
That whan thei preche the peple  
In many places aboute,  
I Wrathe walke with hem,  
And wisse hem of my bokes.  
Thus thei speken of myspiritualté,  
That either despiseth oother, 2768

Til thei be bothe beggers 2769  
 And by my spiritualté libben,  
 Or ellis al riche  
 And ryden aboute.  
 I Wrathe reste nevere,  
 That I ne moste folwe  
 This wikked folk,  
 For swich is my grace.

“I have an aunte to nonne,  
 And an abbesse bothe ;  
 Hir hadde levere swowe or swelte,  
 Than suffre any peyne, 2780

“I have be cook in hir kichene,  
 And the covent served  
 Manye monthes with hem,  
 And with monkes bothe.  
 I was the prioresse potager,  
 And othere povere ladies,  
 And maad hem joutes of janglyng,  
 That dame Johane was a bastard,  
 And dame Claricea knyghtes dough-  
 Ac a cokewold was hir sire ; [ter,  
 And dame Pernele a preestes fyle,  
 Prioresse worth she nevere,  
 For she hadde child in chirie-tyme,  
 Al our chapitre it wiste.

“Of wikkede wordes  
 I Wrathe hire wortes made,  
 Til ‘thow lixt’ and ‘thow lixt’  
 Lopen out at ones,  
 And either hite oother  
 Under the cheke ;  
 Hadde thei had knyves, by Crist !  
 Hir either hadde kild oother. 2802



“Seint Gregory was a good pope,  
 And hadde a good forwit,  
 That no prioresse were preest,  
 For that he ordeyned ; [firste day,  
 They hadde thanne ben *infames* the  
 Thei kan so yvele hele conseil.

“Among monkes I myghte be,  
 Ac many tyme I shonye it ;  
 For there ben manye felle frekes  
 My feeris to asprie,  
 Bothe priour and suppriour  
 And oure *pater abbas* ; 2814  
 And if I telle any tales,  
 Thei taken hem togideres,  
 And doon me faste frydayes  
 To breed and to watre, [hous  
 And am chalanged in the chapitre  
 As I a child were,  
 And baleised on the bare ers,  
 And no brech bitwene.  
 For-thi have I no likyng  
 With tho leodes to wonye.  
 I ete there unthende fisshe, 2825  
 And feble ale drynke ;  
 Ac outhur while whan wyn cometh,  
 Thanne I drynke wyn at eve,  
 And have a flux of a foul mouth  
 Wel fyve dayes after.  
 Al the wikkednesse that I woot  
 By any of oure bretheren,  
 I couthe it in oure cloistre,  
 That al oure covent woot it.”

“Nowrepentethee,”quod Repent-  
 “And reherce thow nevere [aunce,

Counsel that thow knowest 2837  
 By contenaunce ne by right ;  
 And drynk nat over delicatly,  
 Ne to depe neither,  
 That thi wille by cause therof  
 To wrathe myghte turne.  
*Esto sobrius,*" he seide,  
 And assoiled me after,  
 And bad me wilne to wepe  
 My wikkednesse to amende.  
 And thanne cam Coveitise,  
 Kan I hym naght discryve, 2848  
 So hungrily and holwe  
 Sire Hervy hym loked.  
 He was bitel-browed,  
 And baber-lipped also,  
 With two blered eighen  
 As a blynd hagge ;  
 And as a letheren purs  
 Lolled hise chekes,  
 Wel sidder than his chyn  
 Thei chyveled for elde ;  
 And as a bonde-man of his bacon  
 His berd was bi-draveled,  
 With an hood on his heed,  
 A lousy hat above,  
 And in a tawny tabard  
 Of twelf wynter age,  
 Al so torn and baudy,  
 And ful of lys crepyng,  
 But if that a lous couthe  
 Han lopen the bettre, [welthe,  
 She sholde noght han walked on that  
 So was it thred-bare. 2870

“I have ben coveitous,” quod this  
“I bi-knowe it here, [caytif,  
For som tyme I served  
Symme-atte-Style,  
And was his prentice y-plight  
His profit to wayte.

“First I lerned to lye,  
A leef outhur tweyne ;  
Wikkedly to weye  
Was my firste lesson ;  
To Wy and to Wynchestre  
I wente to the feyre, 2882  
With many manere marchaundise,  
As my maister me highte.  
Ne hadde the grace of gyle y-go  
Amonges my chaffare,  
It hadde ben unsold this seven yer,  
So me God helpe !

“Thanne drough I me among dra-  
My donet to lerne, [piers,  
To drawe the liser along,  
The lenger it semed ;  
Among the riche rayes 2893  
I rendred a lesson,  
To broche hem with a pak-nedle,  
And playte hem togideres,  
And putte hem in a presse,  
And pyne hem therinne,  
Til ten yerdes or twelve  
Hadde tolled out thrittene.

“My wif was a webbe,  
And wollen cloth made ;  
She spak to spynnesteres  
To spynnen it oute, 2904

Ac the pound that she paied by 2905  
 Peised a quatron moore  
 Than myn owene auncer,  
 Who so weyed truthe.

“I boughte hire barly-malt,  
 She brew it to selle,  
 Peny ale and puddyng ale  
 She poured togideres,  
 For laborers and for lowe folk  
 That lay by hymselfe.

“The beste ale lay in my bour,  
 Or in my bed-chambre ; 2916  
 And who so bummed therof,  
 Boughte it therafter,  
 A galon for a grote,  
 God woot, no lesse !  
 And yet it cam in cuppe-mele,  
 This craft my wif used.  
 Rose the Regrater  
 Was hire righte name ;  
 She hath holden hukkerie  
 Al hire lif tyme.

Ac I swere now, so thee ik ! 2927  
 That synne wol I lete,  
 And nevere wikkedly weye,  
 Ne wikke chaffare use ;  
 But wenden to Walsyngham,  
 And my wif als,  
 And bidde the Roode of Bromholm  
 Brynge me out of dette.”

“Repentestedow evere ?” quod  
 Repentaunce,  
 “Or restitution madest.” [quod he,  
 “Yis, ones I was y-herberwed,”

‘With an heep of chapmen, 2938  
I roos whan thei were a-reste  
And rifled hire males.”

“That was no restitution,” quod  
Repentaunce,  
“But a robberis thefte ;  
Thow haddest be the bettre worthi  
Ben hanged therfore,  
Than for al that  
That thow hast here shewed.”

“I wende riflynge were restitu-  
cion,” quod he, 2947  
“For I lerned nevere rede on boke ;  
And I kan no Frensshe, in feith,  
But of the ferthestende of North-  
folk.” [Repentaunce,

“Usedestow evere usurie ?” quod  
“In al thi lif tyme.”

“Nay sothly,” he seide,  
“Save in my youthe  
I lerned among Lumbardes  
And Jewes a lesson,  
To weye pens with a peis, 2957  
And pare the hevyeste,  
And lene it for love of the cros,  
To legge a wed and lese it.  
Swiche dedes I dide write,  
If he his day breke,  
I have mo manoirs thorough rerages,  
Than thorough *miseretur et commo-*

“I have lent lordes [dat.  
And ladies my chaffare,  
And ben hire brocour after,  
And bought it myselve ; 2968

Eschaunges and chevysaunces    2969  
 With swich chaffare I dele,  
 And lene folk that lese wole  
 A lippe at every noble,  
 And with Lumbardes lettres  
 I ladde gold to Rome,  
 And took it by tale here,  
 And tolde hem there lasse."

"Lentestow evere lordes,  
 For love of hire mayntenaunce?"

"Ye, I have lent to lordes,  
 Loved me nevere after,                    2980  
 And have y-maad many a knyght  
 Bothe mercer and draper,  
 That payed nevere for his prentis-  
 Noght a peire gloves."                    [hode]

"Hastow pité on povere men,  
 That mote nedes borwe?"

"I have as multe pité of povere  
 As pedlere hath of cattes,                    [men,  
 That wolde kille hem, if he cacche  
 hem myghte,

For coveitise of hir skynnes."    2990

"Artow manlich among thi  
 neghebores

Of thi mete and drynke?"

"I am holden," quod he, "as  
 As hound is in kichene,                    [hende  
 Amonges my neghebores, namely,  
 Swiche a name ich have."

"Now God lene thee nevere,"  
 quod Repentaunce,

"But thow repente the rather,  
 The grace on this grounde                    2999

Thi good wel to bi-sette, 3000  
 Ne thyne heires after thee  
 Have joie of that thow wynnest,  
 Ne thyne executours wel bi-sette  
 The silver that thow hem levest ;  
 And that was wonne with wrong  
 With wikked men be despended.  
 For were I frere of that hous  
 Ther good feith and charité is,  
 I nolde cope us with thi catel,  
 Ne oure kirk amende,  
 Ne have a peny to my pitaunce, 3011  
 So God my soule save !  
 For the beste book in oure hous,  
 Theigh brent gold were the leves,  
 And I wiste witterly  
 Thow were swich as thow tellest.  
*Servus es alterius,*  
*Dum fercula pinguia quæris ;*  
*Pane tuo potius*  
*Vescere, liber eris.*

“ Thow art an unkynde creature,  
 I kan thee noght assoille, 3022  
 Til thow make restitution  
 And rekene with hem alle ;  
 And sithen that Reson rolle it  
 In the registre of hevene,  
 That thow hast maad ech man good,  
 I may thee noght assoile.  
*Non dimittitur peccatum, donec re-*  
*stituatur oblatum.*

“ For alle that han of thi good,  
 Have God my trouthe !  
 Ben holden at the heighe doom 3033

To helpe thee to restitue ; [sooth,  
 And who so leveth noght this be  
 Loke in the Sauter glose,  
 In *Miserere mei, Deus*,  
 Wher I mene truthe ;  
*Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, etc.*  
 Shal nevere werkman in this world  
 Thryve with that thow wynnest.  
*Cum sancto sanctus eris ;*  
 Construwe me this on Englisshe."

Thanne weex that shere we in wan-  
 And wolde han hanged hym ; [hope,  
 Ne hadde Repentaunce the rather  
 Reconforted hym in this manere.

"Have mercy in thi mynde,  
 And with thi mouth biseche it ;  
 For Goddes mercy is moore  
 Than alle hise othere werkes.  
 And al the wikkednesse in this world  
 That man myghte werche or thynke,  
 Nis na-moore to the mercy of God,  
 Than in the see a gleede.

*Omnis iniquitas quantum ad miseri-*  
*cordiam Dei, est quasi scintilla*  
*in medio maris.*

"For-thi have mercy in thymynde,  
 And marchaundise leve it ;  
 For thow hast no good ground  
 To gete thee with a wastel,  
 But if it were with thi tonge,  
 Or ellis with thi two hondes.  
 For the good that thow hast geten  
 Bigan al with falshede, [with,  
 And as longe as thow lyvest ther-



Thow yeldest noght, but borwest.  
 "And if thow wite nevere to  
 Ne whom to restitue, [whiche,  
 Ber it to the bisshope,  
 And bid hym of his grace  
 Bi-sette it hymself,  
 As best is for thi soule ;  
 For he shal answeere for thee  
 At the heighe dome,  
 For thee and for many mo  
 That man shal yeve a rekenyng,  
 What he lerned yow in Lente, 3079  
 Leve thow noon oother,  
 And what helente yow of foure Lordes  
 To lette yow fro synne." [good  
 Now bi-gynneth Gloton  
 For to go to shrifte,  
 And karieth hym to kirke-warde  
 His coupe to shewe ;  
 And Beton the brewestere  
 Bad hym good morwe,  
 And asked at hym with that,  
 Whider-ward he wolde. 3090  
 "To holy chirche," quod he,  
 "For to here masse,  
 And sithen I wole be shryven,  
 And synne na-moore." [she,  
 "I have good ale, gossib," quod  
 "Gloton, woltow assaye?" [he,  
 "Hastowought in thi purs?" quod  
 "Any hote spices?" [she,  
 "I have pepir and piones," quod  
 "And a pound of garleek,  
 And a ferthyng-worth of fenel-seed

For fastynge dayes." 3102

Thanne goth Glotin in,  
 And grete othes after.  
 Cesse the souteresse  
 Sat on the benche ;  
 Watte the warner,  
 And his wif bothe ;  
 Tymme the tynkere,  
 And tweyne of his prentices ;  
 Hikke the hakeney-man,  
 And Hughe the nedlere ;  
 Clarice of Cokkeslane, 3113  
 And the clerk of the chirche ;  
 Dawe the dykere,  
 And a dozeyne othere.

Sire Piers of Pridie,  
 And Pernele of Flaundres ;  
 A ribibour, a ratoner,  
 A rakiere of Chepe,  
 A ropere, a redyng-kyng,  
 And Rose the dyssheres ;  
 Godefray of Garlekhithe,  
 And Griffyn the Walshe ; 3124  
 And upholderes an heep,  
 Erly by the morwe,  
 Geve Gloton with glad chere  
 Good ale to hanselle.

Clement the Cobelere  
 Caste of his cloke,  
 And at the newe feire  
 He nempned it to selle,  
 Hikke the hakeney-man  
 Hitte his hood after,  
 And bad Bette the bocher

3135

Ben on his syde. 3136

Ther were chapmen y-chose  
This chaffare to preise,  
That who so hadde the hood  
Sholde han amendes of the cloke.

Two risen up in rape,  
And rouned togideres,  
And preised thise peny-worthes  
A-part by hemselfe ;  
Thei kouthe noght by hir con-  
Acorden in truthe, [science  
Til Robyn the ropere 3147  
Aroos by the southe,  
And nempned hym for a nounpere,  
That no debat nere.

Hikke the hostiler  
Hadde the cloke,  
In covenannt that Clement  
Sholde the cuppe fille,  
And have Hikkis hood hostiler,  
And holden hym y-served.  
And who so repented rathest  
Sholde aryse after, 3158  
And greten sire Gloton  
With a galon ale.

There was lauhynge and lour-  
And "lat go the cuppe ;" [ynge,  
And seten so till even-song,  
And songen umwhile,  
Til Gloton hadde y-glubbed  
A galon and a gille.  
Hise guttes bigonne to gothelen  
As two gredy sowes ;  
He pissed a potel 3169

In a pater-noster while,                      3170  
 And blew his rounde ruwet  
 At his rugge-bones ende,  
 That alle that herde that horn  
 Held hir noses after,  
 And wisshed it hadde been waxed  
 With a wispe of firses.

He myghte neither steppe ne  
 Er he his staf hadde ;                      [stonde,  
 And thanne gan he to go  
 Like a gle-mannes bicche,  
 Som tyme aside,                      3181  
 And som tyme arere,  
 As who so leith lynes  
 For to lacche foweles.

And whan he drough to the dore,  
 Thanne dymmed his eighen ;  
 He stumbled on the thressshfold,  
 And threw to the erthe.  
 Clement the cobelere  
 Kaughte hym by the myddel,  
 For to liften hym o-lofte ;  
 And leyde hym on his knowes. 3192  
 Ac Gloton was a gret cherl,  
 And a grym in the lifyng,  
 And koughed up a cawdel  
 In Clementes lappe ;  
 Is noon so hungry hound  
 In Hertford shire  
 Dorste lape of that levynges,  
 So un-lovely thei smaughte.

With al the wo of this world,  
 His wif and his wenche  
 Baren hym hom to his bed,                      3203

And broughte hym therinne ; 3204  
And after al this excesse  
He hadde an accidie,  
That he sleep Saterdag and Sondag,  
Til sonne yede to reste.

Thanne waked he of his wynk-  
And wiped hise eighen ; [yng,  
The firste word that he warpe  
Was "where is the bolle?"  
His wif gan edwyte hym tho,  
How wikkedly he lyvede ;  
And Repentaunce right so 3215  
Rebuked hym that tyme,  
"As thow with wordes and werkes  
Has wroght yvele in thi lyve,  
Shryve thee, and be shamed therof,  
And shewe it with thi mouthe."

"I Gloton," quod the grom,  
"Gilty me yelde, [tonge,  
That I have trespassed with my  
I kan noght telle how ofte ;  
Sworen Goddes soule,  
And so me God helpe ! 3226  
There no nede was,  
Nyne hundred tymes.

"And over-seyen me at my soper,  
And som tyme at nones,  
That I Gloton girte it up  
Er I hadde gon a myle,  
An y-spilt that myghte be spared  
And spended on som hungry ;  
Over delicatly on fastyng-dayes  
Dronken and eten bothe,  
And sat som tyme so longe there,

That I sleep and eet at ones.      3238  
 For love of tales in tavernes  
 And for drynke, the moore I dyned;  
 And hyed to the mete er noon,  
 Whan fastyng-days were."

"This shewynge shrift," quod  
 Repentaunce,  
 "Shal be meryt to the."

And thanne gan Gloton greete,  
 And gret doel to make,  
 For his luther lif  
 That he lyved hadde;      3248  
 And avowed to faste,  
 "For hunger or for thurste,  
 Shal nevere fyssh on Fryday  
 Defyen in my wombe,  
 Til abstinence myn aunte  
 Have gyve me leeve;  
 And yet have I hated hire  
 Al my lif tyme." [bered,

Thanne cam Sleuthe al bi-sla-  
 With two slymy eighen;  
 "I moste sitte," seide the segge,  
 "Or ellis sholde I nappe.  
 I may noght stonde ne stoupe,  
 Ne withoute a stool knele;  
 Were I brought a-bedde,  
 But if my tail-ende it made,  
 Sholde no ryngynge do me ryse  
 Er I were ripe to dyne."  
 He bigan Benedicite with a bolc,  
 And his brest knocked,  
 And raxed and rored,  
 And rutte at the laste.      3270

“What, awake, renk!” quod Repentaunce,

“And rape thee to shryfte.”

“If I sholde deye bi this day,  
Me list nought to loke;  
I kan noght parfitly my pater-noster,  
As the preest it syngeth;  
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood,  
And Randolf erl of Chestre; [Lady  
Ac neither of oure Lord ne of oure  
The leeste that evere was maked.

“I have maad avowes fourty,  
And foryete hem on the morwe;  
I perfournede nevere penaunce  
As the preest me highte;  
Ne right sory for my synnes  
Yet was I nevere.

And if I bidde any bedes,  
But if it be in wrathe,  
That I telle with my tonge  
Is two myle fro myn herte.

I am ocupied eche day,  
Haly-day and oother, 3292  
With ydel tales at the ale,  
And outhere while at chirche;  
Goddes peyne and his passion  
Ful selde thenke I on it.

“I visited nevere feble men,  
Ne fettred folk in puttes;  
I have levere here an harlotrye,  
Or a somer game of souters,  
Or lesynge to laughen at  
And bi-lye my neghebores,  
Than al that evere Marc made, 3303

Mathew, Johan, and Lucas.     3304  
 And vigilies and fastyng-dayes,  
 Alle thise late I passe ;  
 And ligge a-bedde in Lenten,  
 And my lemman in myne armes,  
 Til matyns and masse be do,  
 And thanne go to the freres.  
 Come I to *Ite, missa est*,  
 I holde me y-served ;  
 I nam noght shryven som tyme,  
 But if siknesse it make,  
 Nought twyes in two yer,     3315  
 And thanne up gesse I shryve me.

“I have be preest and parson  
 Passynge thritty wynter,  
 And yet can I neyther solne ne  
 Ne seintes lyves rede ;     [syngge,  
 But I kan fynden in a feld,  
 Or in a furlang, an hare,  
 Bettre than in *Beatus vir*,  
 Or in *Beati omnes*,  
 Construe oon clause wel  
 And kenne it to my parisshens.  
 I kan holde love-dayes,  
 And here a reves rekenyng ;  
 Ac in canon nor in decretals  
 I kan noght rede a lyne.

“If I bigge and borwe aught,  
 But if it be y-tailed,  
 I foryete it as yerne ;  
 And if men me it axe  
 Sixe sithes or sevene,  
 I forsake it with othes ;  
 And thus tene I trewe men     3337



Ten hundred tymes. 3338

“And my servauntz som tyme  
Hir salarie is bi-hynde ;  
Ruthe it is to here the rekenyng,  
Whan we shul rede acountes.  
So with wikked wil and wrathe,  
My werkmen I paye.

“If any man dooth me a bienfait,  
Or helpeth me at nede,  
I am unkynde ayeins curteisie,  
And kan nought understouden it ;  
For I have and have had 3349  
Som del haukes maneres,

I am noght lured with love, [thombe.  
But ther ligge aught under the

“The kyndenesse that myn even  
Kidde me fernyere, [cristene  
Sixty sithes I Sleuthe  
Have foryete it siththe.

In speche and in sparynge of speche  
Y-spilt many a tyme  
Bothe flessch and fissh,

And manye othere vitailles, 3360  
Both bred and ale,

Buttre, melk, and chese,  
For-sleuthe in my service  
Til it myghte serve no man.

“I ran aboute in youthe,  
And yaf me naught to lerne,  
And evere siththe have I be beggere  
For my foule sleuthe.

*Heu michi ! quia sterilem vitam duxi  
juvenilem.*” [Repentaunce ;

“Repentedestow noght ?” quod

And right with that he swowned,  
 Til *Vigilate* the veille  
 Fette water at hise eighen,  
 And flatte it on his face,  
 And faste on hym cryde,  
 And seide, "Ware thee, for Wan-  
 Wolde thee bi-traye, [hope  
 'I am sory for my synnes'  
 Seye to thiselve,  
 And beet thiself on the brest,  
 And bidde hym of grace;  
 For is ne gilt here so gret 3383  
 That his goodnesse nys moore."

Thanne sat Sleuthe up,  
 And seyned hym swithe,  
 And made a vow to-fore God  
 For his foule sleuthe.  
 "Shal no Sondag be this seven yer,  
 But siknesse it lette,  
 That I ne shal do me er day  
 To the deere chirche;  
 And here matyns and masse,  
 As I a monk were, 3394  
 Shal noon ale after mete  
 Holde me thennes,  
 Til I have even-song herd,  
 I bi-hote to the roode!  
 And yet wole I yelde ayein,  
 If I so much have,  
 Al that I wikkedly wan  
 Sithen I wit hadde.

"And though my liflode lakke,  
 Leten I nelle,  
 That ech man ne shal have his,

Er I hennes wende ; [menaunt,  
And with the residue and the re-  
Bi the Rode of Chestre !  
I shal seken Truthe erst  
Er I se Rome."

Roberd the robbere  
On *Reddite* loked,  
And for ther was noght wherof,  
He wepte swithe soore ;  
Ac yet the synfulle sherewe  
Seide to hymselfe,  
"Crist, that on Calvarie 3417  
Upon the cros deidest,  
Tho Dysmas my brother  
Bi-soughte yow of grace,  
And haddest mercy on that man  
For *memento* sake,  
So rewe on this robbere  
That *reddere* ne have,  
Ne nevere wene to wynne  
With craft that I owe ;  
But for thi muchel mercy  
Mitigacion I bi-seche, 3423  
Ne dampne me noght at domes-day  
For that I dide so ille."

What bi-fel of this feloun  
I kan noght faire shewe ;  
Wel I woot he wepte faste  
Water with bothe hise eighen,  
And knoweliched his gilt  
To Crist yet eft soones,  
That *Pœnetentia* his pik  
He sholde polshe newe,  
And lepe with hym over lond 3439

Al his lif tyme, 3440  
 For he hadde leyen by *Latro*  
 Luciferis aunte. [ruthe,

And thanne hadde Repentaunce  
 And redde hem alle to knele ;  
 “For I shal bi-seche for alle synfulle  
 Our Saveour of grace,  
 To amenden us of oure mysdedes,  
 And do mercy to us alle.”

“Now God,” quod he, “that of  
 thi goodnesse  
 Bi-gonne the world to make, 3450  
 And of naught madest aught, and  
 Moost lik to thiselve, [man  
 And sithen suffredest for to synne,  
 A siknesse to us alle,  
 And al for the beste, as I bi-leve,  
 What evere the book telleth.  
*O felix culpa ! O necessarium pec-*  
*catum Adæ ! etc.*

“For thorough that synne thi sone  
 Sent was to this erthe,  
 And bicam man of a maide, 3461  
 Mankynde to save :  
 And madest thiself with thi sone  
 And us synfulle y-liche  
*Faciamus hominem ad imaginem*  
*nostram. Et alibi. Qui manet*  
*in caritate, in Deo manet, et*  
*Deus in eo.*

“And siththe with thi selve sone  
 In oure secte deidest,  
 On Good-Fryday, for mannes sake,  
 At ful tyme of the daye, 3472

Ther thiself ne thi sone 3473

No sorwe in deeth feledest,  
But in oure secte was the sorwe,  
And thi sone it ladde.

*Captivam duxit captivitatem.*

“The sonne for sorwe therof  
Lees light of a tyme,  
Aboute mydday whan moostlightis,  
And meel-tyme of seintes,  
Feddest with thi fresshe blood  
Oure fore-fadres in derknesse.

*Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris,  
vidit lucem magnam.*

“And thorough the light that lepe  
Lucifer was blent. [out of thee  
And blewe alle thi blessed  
Into the blisse of paradys.

“The thridde day after  
Thow yedest in oure sute,  
A synful Marie the seigh,  
Er seynte Marie thi dame;  
And al to solace synfulle  
Thow suffredest it so were. 3495

*Non veni vocare justos sed peccatores  
ad poenitentiam.*

“And al that Marc hath y-maad,  
Mathew, Johan, and Lucas,  
Of thyne doughty dedes  
Was doon in oure armes.

*Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit  
in nobis.*

“And by so muche me semeth  
The sikerer we mowe  
Bidde and bi-seche, 3506

If it be thi wille, 3507  
 That artoure fader and oure brother,  
 Be merciabie to us,  
 And have ruthe on thise ribaudes  
 That repenten hem here soore,  
 That evere thei wrathed thee in this  
 In word, thought, or dedes." [world,  
     Thanne hent Hope an horn  
 Of *Deus, tu conversus vivificabis,*  
 And blew it with *Beati quorum*  
*Remissæ sunt iniquitates,*  
 That alle seintes in hevene 3518  
 Songen at ones.

*Homines et jumenta salvabis, quem-*  
*admodum multiplicasti miseri-*  
*cordiam tuam.*

A thousand of men tho  
 Thrungen togideres,  
 Cride upward to Crist,  
 And to his clene moder,  
 To have grace to go with hem  
 Truthe to seke.

Ac there was wight noon so wys  
 The wey thider kouthē,  
 But blustreden forth as beestes  
 Over bankes and hilles;  
 Til late was and longe  
 That thei a leode mette,  
 Apparilled as a paynym  
 In pilgrymes wise.  
 He bar a burdoun y-bounde  
 With a brood liste,  
 In a withwynde wise  
 Y-wounden aboute ;

A bolle and a bagge 3541  
He bar by his syde,  
And hundred of ampulles  
On his hat seten,  
Signes of Synay,  
And shelles of Galice,  
And many a crouche on his cloke,  
And keyes of Rome,  
And the vernyele bi-fore,  
For men sholde knowe  
And se bi hise signes  
Whom he sought hadde. 3552

This folk frayned hym first,  
Fro whennes he come.

"Fram Syny," he seide,  
"And fram oure Lordes sepulere ;  
In Bethlem and in Babiloyne,  
I have ben in bothe ;  
In Armonye and Alisaundre,  
In manye othere places.  
Ye may se by my signes,  
That sitten on myn hatte,  
That I have walked ful wide 3563  
In weet and in drye,  
And sought goode seintes  
For my soules helthe."

"Knowestow aught a corsaint,  
That men calle Truthe ?  
Koudestow aught wissen us the wey,  
Wher that wye dwelleth ?"

"Nay, so me God helpe !"  
Seide the gome thanne,  
"I seigh nevere palmere,  
With pyk ne with scrippe, 3574

Asken after hym er 3575  
 Til now in this place."

"Peter!" quod a plowman,  
 And putte forth his hed,  
 "I knowe hym as kyndely  
 As clerk doth hise bokes;  
 Conscience and kynde wit  
 Kenned me to his place,  
 And diden me suren hym sikerly  
 To serven hym for evere,  
 Bothe to sowe and to sette, 3586  
 The while I swynke myghte.  
 I have ben his folwere  
 Al this fifty wynter,  
 Bothe y-sowen his seed,  
 And suwed hise beestes,  
 Withinne and withouten  
 Waited his profit.  
 I dyke and I delve,  
 I do that Truthe hoteth;  
 Som tyme I sowe,  
 And som tyme I thresshe;  
 In taillours craft and tynkeris craft,  
 What Truthe kan devyse,  
 I weve and I wynde,  
 And do what Truthe hoteth,  
 For though I seye it myselfe,  
 I serve hym to paye;  
 I have myn hire wel,  
 And outhur whiles moore.  
 He is the presteste paiere  
 That povere men knoweth;  
 He ne withhalt noon hewe his hire,  
 That he ne hath it at even; 3608



He is as lowe as a lomb, 3609  
 And lovelieh of speche ;  
 And if ye wilneth to wite  
 Where that he dwelleth,  
 I shal wisse you witterly  
 The way to his place."

"Ye, leve Piers," quod thise pil-  
 And profred hym huyre, [grimes,  
 For to wende with hem  
 To Truthes dwellyng-place.

"Nay, by my soules helpe!" quod  
 And gan for to swere, [Piers,  
 "I nolde fange a ferthyng.  
 For seint Thomas shryne ;  
 Truthe wolde love me the lasse  
 A long tyme therafter ;  
 Ac if yow wilneth to wende wel,  
 This is the way thider.

"Ye moten go thorough Meke-  
 Both men and wyves, [nesse,  
 Til ye come into Conscience,  
 That Crist wite the sothe  
 That ye loven oure Lord God 3631  
 Levest of alle thynges,  
 And thanne youre neghebores next  
 In none wise apeire,  
 Other wise than thow woldest  
 He wroughte to thiselve.

"And so boweth forth by a brook,  
 Beth-buxom-of-speche,  
 Til he fynden a ford,  
 Youre-fadres-honoureth,  
*Honora patrem et matrem, etc.*  
 Wadeth in that water, 3642

And wasshe yow wel therinne, 3643  
 And ye shul lepe the lightloker  
 Al youre lif tyme ;  
 And so shaltow se Swere-noght,-  
 But-if-it-be-for-nede,-  
 And-nameliehe-on-ydel-  
 The-name-of-God-almyghty.

“Thanne shaltowe come by a croft,  
 But come thow noght therinne ;  
 That croft hatte Coveite-noght-  
 Mennes-catel-ne-hire-wyves,-  
 Ne-noon-of-hire-servauntz- 3654  
 That-noyen-hem-myghte ;  
 Loke ye breke no bowes there,  
 But if it be youre owene.

“Two stokkes ther stondesth,  
 Ae stynte ye noght there,  
 Thei highte Stele-noght and Sle-  
 Strik forth by bothe, [noght,  
 And leve hem on thi lift half,  
 And loke noght thereafter,  
 And hold wel thyn hali-day  
 Heighe til even. 3665

“Thanne shaltow blenche at a  
 Bere-no-fals-witnesse, [bergh,  
 He is frythed in with floryns  
 And othere fees manye ;  
 Loke thow plukke no plaunte there,  
 For peril of thi soule ;  
 Thanne shul ye see Seye-sooth,-  
 So-it-be-to-doone,-  
 In-good-manere,-ellis-noght-  
 For-no-mannes-biddyng.

“Thanne shaltow come to a court

As cler as the sonne ; 3677  
The moot is of Mercy  
The manoir aboute,  
And alle the walles ben of Wit,  
To holden Wil oute,  
And kerneled wit Cristendom,  
Mankynde to save,  
Botrased with Bileef-so,-  
Or-thow-beest-noght-saved.

“ And alle the houses ben hiled,  
Halles and chambres,  
With no leed but with love, 3688  
And lowe speche as bretheren ;  
The brugg is of Bidde-wel,-  
The-bet-may-thow-spede ;  
Ech piler is of penaunce,  
Of preieres to seyntes ;  
Of almes-dedes are the hokes  
That the gates hangen on.

“ Grace hatte the gatewarde,  
A good man for sothe ;  
His man hatte Amende-yow,  
For many men hym knoweth ; 3699  
Telleth hym this tokene,  
That Truthe wite the sothe ;  
‘ I perfourned the penaunce  
That the preest me enjoyned,  
And am ful sory for my synnes,  
And so I shal evere,  
Whan I thynke theron,  
Theigh I were a pope.’

“ Biddeth Amende-yow meke hym  
Til his maister ones,  
To wayven up the wiket 3710

That the womman shette,                    3711  
 Tho Adam and Eve  
 Eten apples un-rosted.

*Per Evam cunctis clausa est, et per  
 Mariam virginem patefacta est.*

“ For he hath the keye and the  
 Though the kyng slepe.                    [cliket,  
 And if grace graunte thee  
 To go in this wise,

Thow shalt see in thiselve  
 Truthe in thyn herte,  
 In a cheyne of charité                    3722

As thow a child were,  
 To suffren hym and segge noght  
 Ayein thi sires wille.

“ And be war thanne of Wrathe-  
 That is a wikked sherewe ;                    [thee,  
 He hath envye to hym  
 That in thyn herte sitteth,  
 And poketh forth pride  
 To preise thiselven.

The boldnesse of thi bienfetes  
 Maketh thee blynd thanne ;                    3733

And thanne worstow dryven out as  
 And the dore closed,                    [dew,  
 Keyed and cliketted,

To kepe thee withouten ;  
 Happily an hundred wynter  
 Er thow eft entre.

Thus mgyhtestow lesen his love,  
 To lete wel by thiselve,  
 And nevere happily eft entre,  
 But grace thow have.

“ And ther are seven sustren                    3744

That serven Truthe evere, 3745  
And arn porters of the posternes  
That to the place longeth.

“That oon hatte Abstinence,  
And Humilité another ;  
Charité and Chastité  
Ben hise chief maydenes ;  
Pacience and Pees  
Muche peple thei helpeth ;  
Largenesse the lady,  
She let in ful manye,  
Heo hath holpe a thousand out  
Of the develes punfolde ;  
And who is sib to thise sevene,  
So me God helpe !  
He is wonderly welcome,  
And faire underfongen.  
And but if ye be sibbe  
To some of thise sevene, [Piers,  
It is ful hard, by myn heed !” quod  
“For any of yow alle  
To geten in-going at any gate there,  
But grace be the moore.” 3767

“Now by Crist !” quod a kutte-  
“I have no kyn there.” [purs,  
“Nor I,” quod an ape-ward,  
“By aught that I kan knowe.”  
“Wite God !” quod a wafrestere,  
“Wiste I this for sothe,  
Sholde I nevere ferther a foot,  
For no freres prechyng.”

“Yis,” quod Piers the Plowman,  
And poked hem alle to goode,  
“Mercy is a maiden there 3778





*Passus Sextus de Visione, ut  
supra.*

“**T**HIS were a wikkede wey,  
But who so hadde a gyde,  
That wolde folwen us ech  
a foot ;”

Thus this folke hem mened.

Quod Perkyn the Plowman,

“By seint Peter of Rome !

I have an half acre to erie

By the heighe weye ;

Hadde I erylde this half acre,

And sowen it after,

I wolde wende with yow,

And the wey teche.”

3805

“This were a long lettyng,”

Quod a lady in scleyre,

“What sholde we wommen

Werche the while ?” [Piers,

“Sommeshul sowe the sak,” quod

“For shedyng of the whete ;

And ye, lovely ladies,

With youre longe fynGRES,

That ye have silk and sandel

To sowe, whan tyme is ;

Chesibles for chapeleyns,

Chirches to honoure.

3817

"Wyves and widewes, 3818  
 Wolle and flex spynneth;  
 Maketh cloth, I counseille yow,  
 And kenneth so youre doughtres;  
 The nedy and the naked,  
 Nymeth hede how thei liggeth,  
 And casteth hem clothes,  
 For so comaundeth Truthe.  
 For I shal leven hem liflode,  
 But if the lond faille,  
 Flesshe and breed bothe  
 To riche and to poore, 3829  
 As long as I lyve,  
 For the Lordes love of hevene;  
 And alle manere of men     [beth,  
 That thorough mete and drynke lib-  
 Helpeth hym to werche wightliche,  
 That wynneth youre foode."  
 "By Crist!" quod a knyght thoo,  
 "He kenneth us the beste;  
 Ac on the teme, trewely,  
 Taught was I nevere; 3840  
 But kenne me," quod the knyght,  
 "And by Crist I wole assaye!"  
 "By seint Poul!" quod Perkyn,  
 "Ye profre yow so faire,  
 That I shal swynke and swete,  
 And sowe for us bothe,  
 And othere labours do for thi love  
 Al my lif tyme,  
 In covenaut that thow kepe  
 Holy kirke and myselve  
 Fro wastours and fro wikked men  
 That this world destruyeth. 3851



And go hunte hardiliche 3852  
 To hares and to foxes,  
 To bores and to brokkes  
 That breken down myne hegges ;  
 And so affaite thi faucons  
 Wilde foweles to kille ;  
 For swiche cometh to my croft,  
 And croppeth my whete."

Curteisly the knyght thanne  
 Comsed thise wordes ;  
 "By my power, Piers !" quod he,  
 "I plighte thee my trouthe, 3863  
 To fulfille this forwarde,  
 Though I fighte sholde ;  
 Als longe as I lyve  
 I shal thee mayntene."

"Ye, and yet a point," quod  
 "I preye yow of moore, [Piers,  
 Loke ye tene no tenaunt,  
 But Truthe wole assente ;  
 And though ye mowe amercy hem,  
 Lat mercy be taxour,  
 And mekenesse thi maister, 3874  
 Maugree Medes chekes.  
 And though povere men profre yow  
 Presentes and giftes,  
 Nyme it noght, an aventure  
 Ye mowe it noght deserve ;  
 For thow shalt yelde it ayein  
 At one yeres tyme,  
 In a ful perilous place,  
 Purgatorie it hatte. [men,

"And mys-bede noght thi bonde-  
 The bettre may thow spede ; 3885

Though he be thyn underlyng here,  
 Wel may happe in hevene  
 That he worth worthier set,  
 And with moore blisse.

*Amice, ascende superius.*

For in charnel at chirche  
 Cherles ben yvel to knowe,  
 Or a knyght from a knave there,  
 Knowe this in thyn herte.  
 And that thow be trewe of thi tonge,  
 And tales that thow hatie,  
 But if thei ben of wisdom or of wit  
 Thi werkmen to chaste.  
 Hold with none harlotes,  
 Ne here noght hir tales,  
 And namely at the mete  
 Swiche men eschuwe ;  
 For it ben the develes disours,  
 I do the to understonde."

"I assente, by seint Jame !"

Seide the knyght thanne,  
 "For to werche by thi wordes  
 The while my lif dureth." 3908

"And I shal apparaille me," quod  
 "In pilgrymes wise, [Perkyn,  
 And wende with yow I wile,  
 Til we fynde Truthe ;  
 And caste on my clothes  
 Y-clouted and hole,  
 My cokeres and my coffes,  
 For cold of my nailes ;  
 And hange myn hoper at myn hals  
 In stede of a scryppe.  
 A busschel of bred corn 3919

Brynge me therinne ; 3920  
 For I wol sowe it myself,  
 And sithenes wol I wende  
 To pilgrymage, as palmeres doon,  
 Pardon for to have.

And who so helpeth me to erie  
 And sowen here er I wende,  
 Shal have leve, by oure Lorde !  
 To lese here in hervest,  
 And make hem murie thermyd,  
 Maugree who so bi-gruccheth it.  
 And alle kynne crafty-men, 3931  
 That konne lyven in truthe,  
 I shal fynden hem fode,  
 That feithfulliche libbeth.

“ Save Jagge the jogelour,  
 And Jonette of the stuwes,  
 And Danyel the dees-pleyere,  
 And Denote the baude,  
 And frere the faitour,  
 And folk of hire ordre,  
 And Robyn the ribaudour  
 For hise rusty wordes. 3942

Truthe tolde me ones,  
 And bad me telle it after,  
*Delegantur de libro viventium,*  
 I sholde noght dele with hem,  
 For holy chirche is hote of hem  
 No tithe to take ;  
*Qui cum justis non scribantur ;*  
 They ben ascaped good aventure,  
 God hem amende ! ”

Dame Werch-whan-tyme-is  
 Piers wif highte ; 3953

His doughter highte Do-right-so,-  
 Or-thi-dame-shal-thee-bete ;  
 His sone highte Suffre-thi-sove-  
 To-haven-hir-wille,- [reyns-  
 Deme-hem-noght,-for-if-thow-doost,-  
 Thow-shalt-it-deere-abugge.  
 Lat God y-worthe with al,  
 For so his word techeth ;  
 For now I am old and hoor,  
 And have of myn owene,  
 To penaunce and to pilgrimage  
 I wol passe with thise othere. 3965

“For-thi I wole er I wende  
 Do write my biqueste,  
*In Dei nomine, Amen,*  
 I make it myselve ;  
 He shal have my soule,  
 That best hath deserved it ;  
 And fro the fend it defende,  
 For so I bileve,  
 Til I come to hise acountes,  
 As my Credo me telleth,  
 To have a relees and a remission,  
 On that rental I leve.

“The kirke shal have my caroyne,  
 And kepe my bones ;  
 For of my corn and catel  
 She craved the tithe ;  
 I paide it ful prestly,  
 For peril of my soule.  
 For-thi is he holden I hope  
 To have me in his masse,  
 And mengen in his memorie  
 Amonges alle cristene. 3987

“My wif shal have of that I wan  
With truthe, and na-moore,  
And dele among my doughtres,  
And my deere children ;  
For though I deye to day,  
My dettes are quyte ;  
I bar hom that I borwed,  
Er I to bedde yede. [remenaunt,

“And with the residue and the  
By the Rode of Lukes !  
I wol worshipe therwith  
Truthe by my lyve, 3999  
And ben his pilgrym atte plow,  
For povere mennes sake.  
My plow-foot shall be my pikstaf,  
And picche a-two the rotes,  
And helpe my cultour to kerve  
And cense the furwes.”

Now is Perkyn and hise pilgrimes  
To the plow faren ;  
To erie his half acre  
Holpen hym manye ;  
Dikeres and delveres 4010  
Digged up the balkes.  
Therwith was Perkyn a-payd,  
And preised hem faste.

Othere werkmen ther were  
That wroghten ful yerne ;  
Ech man in his manere  
Made hymself to doone,  
And somme to plese Perkyn  
Piked up the wedes.

At heigh prime Piers  
Leet the plowgh stonde, 4021

To over-sen hem hymself,     4022  
 And who so best wroghte  
 He sholde be hired therafter,  
 Whan hervest tyme come.

And thanne seten somme,  
 And songen atte nale,  
 And holpen ere this half acre  
 With "How, trolly lolly."

"Now, by the peril of my soule!"  
 All in pure tene,     [quod Piers,  
 "But ye arise the rather  
 And rape yow to werche,     4033  
 Shal no greyn that groweth  
 Glade yow at nede,  
 And though ye deye for doel,  
 The devel have that reccheth."

Tho were faitours a-fered,  
 And feyned hem blynde;  
 Somme leide hir legges a-liry,  
 As swiche losels konneth,  
 And made hir mone to Piers,  
 And preide hym of grace;  
 "For we have no lymes to laboure  
 Lord, y-graced be the;     [with,  
 Ac we preie for yow, Piers,  
 And for youre plowgh bothe,  
 That God of his grace  
 Youre greyn multiplie,  
 And yelde yow for youre almesse  
 That ye gyve us here;  
 For we may nocht swynke ne swete,  
 Swich siknesse us eyleth."

"If it be sooth," quod Piers, "that  
 I shal it soone asprie.     [ye seyn,

Ye ben wastours, I woot wel, 4056  
And Truthe woot the sothe ;  
And I am his olde hyne,  
And highte hym to warne,  
Whiche thei were in this world  
Hise werkmen apeired.

Ye wasten that men wynnen  
With travaille and with tene ;  
Ac Truthe shal teche yow  
His teme to dryve,  
Or ye shul eten barley breed,  
And of the broke drynke. 4067

“But if he be blynd or broke-  
Or bolted with irens, [legged,  
He shall ete whete breed,  
And drynke with myselve,  
Til God of his goodnesse  
Amendement hym sende.

Ac ye myghte travaille, as Truthe  
And take mete and hyre, [wolde,  
To kepe kyen in the feld,  
The corn fro the beestes,  
Diken or delven, 4078

Or dyngen upon sheves,  
Or helpe make mortar,  
Or bere muk a-feld.

“In lecherie and in losengerie  
Ye lyven, and in sleuthe ;  
And al is thorough suffraunce,  
That vengeance yow ne taketh.

“Ac ances and heremites  
That eten noght but at nones,  
And na-moore er the morwe,  
Myn almesse shul thei have, 4089

And of catel to kepe hem with, 4090  
That han cloistres and chirches.

“Ac Robert Renaboute  
Shal noght have of myne,  
Ne postles, but thei preche konne  
And have power of the bisshope;  
Thei shul have payn and potage,  
And make himself at ese,  
For it is an unreasonable religion  
That hath right noght of certein.”

And thanne gan Wastour to  
    wrathen hym, 4100  
And wolde have y-foughte;  
And to Piers the Plowman  
He profrede his glove;  
A bretoner, a braggere,  
A-bosted Piers als,  
And bad hym go pissen with his  
“For-pynede sherewe! [plowgh,  
Wiltow or neltow,  
We wol have oure wille  
Of thi flour and of thi flesshe,  
Fecche whanne us liketh; 4111  
And maken us murye thermyde,  
Maugree thi chekes.”

Thanne Piers the Plowman  
Pleynd hym to the knyghte,  
To kepen hym as covenaut was  
Fro cursede sherewes, [kynnes  
And fro thise wastours wolves-  
That maketh the world deere;  
“For thowasten and wynnen noght,  
And that ilke while [peple,  
Worth nevere plentee among the



The while my plowgh liggeth." 4123

Curteisly the knyght thanne,  
As his kynde wolde,  
Warnede Wastour,  
And wissed hym bettre,  
"Or thow shalt abigge by the lawe,  
By the ordre that I bere!"

"I was noght wont to werche,"  
quod Wastour,  
"And now wol I noght bigynne;"  
And leet light of the lawe,  
And lasse of the knyghte; 4133  
And sette Piers at a pese,  
And his plowgh bothe;  
And manaced Piers and his men,  
If thei mette eft soone. [quod Piers,

"Now, by the peril of my soule!"  
"I shal apeire yow alle;"  
And houped after Hunger,  
That herde hym at the firste,  
"A-wreke me of thise wastours,"  
quod he,

"That this world shendeth." 4143  
Hunger in haste thoo  
Hente Wastour by the wombe,  
And wrong him so by the wombe,  
That bothe hise eighen watrede.

He buffeted the bretoner  
Aboute the chekes,  
That he loked lik a lanterne  
Al his lif after.  
He bette hem so bothe,  
He brast ner hire guttes;  
Ne hadde Piers with a pese loof 4154

Preyed Hunger to cesse, 4155  
They hadde be dolven,  
Ne deme thow noon oother.

“ Suffre hem lyve,” he seide,  
 “ And lat hem ete with hogges,  
 Or ellis benes or bren  
 Y-baken togideres,  
 Or ellis melk and mene ale ; ”  
 Thus preied Piers for hem.

Faitours for fere herof  
Flowen into bernes,  
And flapten on with flailes 4166  
Fro morwe til even ;  
That Hunger was noght so hardy  
On hem for to loke,  
For a potful of peses  
That Piers hadde y-maked.

An heep of heremytes  
Henten hem spades,  
And kitten hir copes,  
And courtepies hem maked,  
And wente as werkmen  
With spades and with shoveles 4177  
And dolven and dikeden,  
To dryve away hunger.

Blynde and bed-reden  
Were bootned a thousande,  
That seten to begge silver,  
Soone were thei heeled ;  
For that was bake for bayarde,  
Was boote for many hungry ;  
And many a beggere for benes  
Buxum was to swynke ;  
And eche a povere man wel a-paied

To have pesen for his hyre, 4189  
And what Piers preide hem to do,  
As prest as a sperhawk ;  
And therof was Piers proud,  
And putte hem to werke,  
And yaf hem mete as he myghte  
And mesurable hyre. [aforthe,

Thanne had Piers pité,  
And preide Hunger to wende  
Hoom unto his owene yerd,  
And holden hym there ;

“For I am wel a-wroke 4200  
Of wastours, thorough thy myghte.

Ac I preie thee, er thou passe,”

Quod Piers to Hunger,  
“Of beggeris and of bidderis

What best be to doone.

For I woot wel, be thou went,

Thei wol werche ful ille ;

For meschief it maketh

Thei be so meke nouthe,

And for defaute of hire foode

This folk is at my wille. 4211

“Thei are my bloody bretheren,”

quod Piers,

“For God boughte us alle.

Truthe taughte me ones

To loven hem echone ;

And to helpen hem of alle thyng

Ay as hem nedeth.

And now wolde I wite of thee

What were the beste ;

And how I myghte a-maistren hem,

And make hem to werche.” 4221

"Here now," quod Hunger, 4222  
 "And hoold it for a wisdom ;  
 Bolde beggeris and bigge  
 That mowe hir breed bi-swynke,  
 With houndes breed and horse breed  
 Hoold up hir hertes ;  
 A-bate hem with benes,  
 For bollynge of hir wombes ;  
 And if the gomes grucche,  
 Bidde hem go swynke,  
 And he shal soupe swetter  
 Whan he it hath deserved. 4233

"And if thow fynde any freke  
 That fortune hath apeired,  
 Or any manere false men,  
 Fonde thow swiche to knowe ;  
 Conforte hym with thi catel,  
 For Cristes love of hevene ;  
 Love hem and leve hem,  
 So lawe of God techeth,  
*Alter alterius onera portare.*

"And alle manere of men  
 That thow myght aspie, 4244  
 That nedy ben and noughty,  
 Help hem with thi goodes ;  
 Love hem and lakke hem noght,  
 Lat God take the vengeaunce ;  
 Theigh thei doon yvele,  
 Lat God y-worthe.  
*Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam.*

"And if thow wilt be gracious to  
 Do as the gospel techeth, [God,  
 And bi-love thee amonges lewed  
 So shaltow lacche grace ; [men,

*Facite vos amicos de Mammona iniquitatis.*"

[Piers,  
"I wolde noght greve God," quod  
"For al the good on grounde.

Mighte I synne-lees do as thow  
Seide Piers thanne. [seist?"

"Ye, I bi-hotet thee," quod Hunger,  
"Or ellis the Bible lieth ;

Go to Genesis the geaunt,  
The engendroure of us alle :

*In sudore* and swynk

Thow shalt thi mete tilie, 4267

And laboure for thi liflode,

And so oure Lorde highte.

And Sapience seith the same,

I seigh it in the Bible,

*Piger præ frigore*

No feeld nolde tilie,

And therfore he shal begge and bidde,

And no man bete his hunger.

"Mathew with mannes face

Mouthed thise wordes,

That *servus nequam* hadde a mnam,

And for he wolde noght chaffare,

He hadde maugree of his maister

Evere moore after,

And by-nam hym his mnam,

For he ne wolde werche,

And yaf that mnam to hym

That ten mnames hadde ;

And with that he seide,

That holy chirche it herde,

He that hath shal have

And helpe there it nedeth ; 4289

And he that noght hath shal noght  
 And no man hym helpe,      [have,  
 And that he weneth wel to have  
 I wole it hym bi-reve.

Kynde wit wolde  
 That ech a wight wroghte,  
 Or in dikynge or in delvyng,  
 Or travaillynge in preieres ;  
 Contemplatif lif or actif lif  
 Crist wolde thei wroghte.  
 The Sauter seith in the Psalme  
 Of *Beati omnes*,      4301

The freke that fedeth hymself  
 With his feithful labour,  
 He is blessed by the book  
 In body and in soule."  
*Labores manuum tuarum, etc.*

"Yet I preie yow," quod Piers,  
 "*Par charité*, and ye konne  
 Any leef of leche-craft,  
 Lere it me, my deere ;  
 For some of my servauntz,  
 And myself bothe,      4312  
 Of al a wike werche noght,  
 So oure wombe aketh."

"I woot wel," quod Hunger,  
 "What siknesse yow eyleth ;  
 Ye han manged over muche,  
 And that maketh yow grone.  
 Ac I hote thee," quod Hunger,  
 "As thow thyn hele wilnest,  
 That thow drynke no day  
 Er thow dyne som what.  
 Ete noght, I hote thee,      4323

Er hunger thee take, 4324  
 And sende thee of his sauce  
 To savore with thi lippes ;  
 And keep som til seper-tyme,  
 And sitte noght to longe,  
 And rys up er appetit  
 Have eten his fille.  
 Lat noght sire Surfet  
 Sitten at thi borde.  
 Leve hym ncght, for he is lecherous,  
 And likerous of tunge,  
 And after many maner metes 4335  
 His mawe is a-fyngred.

“ And if thow diete thee thus,  
 I dar legge myne eris,  
 That Phisik shal hise furred hodes  
 For his fode selle,  
 And his cloke of Calabre,  
 With alle the knappes of golde,  
 And be fayn, by my feith !  
 His phisik to lete,  
 And lerne to laboure with lond,  
 For liflode is swete. 4346  
 For murthereris are manye leches,  
 Lord hem amende ! [drynkes,  
 They do men deye thorough hir  
 Er destynce it wolde.”

“ By seint Poul ! ” quod Piers,  
 “ Thise arn profitable wordes !  
 Wend now, Hunger, whan thow  
 That wel be thow evere ! [wolt,  
 For this is a lovely lesson,  
 Lord it thee for-yelde ! ”

“ Bi-hote God ! ” quod Hunger,

“ Hennes ne wole I wende,     4358  
 Til I have dyned bi this day,  
 And y-dronke bothe.”

“ I have no peny,” quod Piers,  
 “ Pulettes to bugge,  
 Ne neither gees ne grys,  
 But two grene cheses,  
 A fewe cruddes and creme,  
 And an haver cake,  
 And two loves of benes and bran  
 Y-bake for my fauntes ;  
 And yet I seye, by my soule !     4369  
 I have no salt bacon,  
 Ne no cokeney, by Crist !  
 Coloppes for to maken.

“ Ac I have percile and porettes,  
 And manye cole plauntes,  
 And ek a cow and a calf,  
 And a cart mare  
 To drawe a-feld my donge,  
 The while the droghte lasteth ;  
 And by this liflode we mote lyve  
 Til Lammesse tyme.     4380  
 And by that, I hope to have  
 Hervest in my crofte,  
 And thanne may I dighte thi dyner,  
 As me deere liketh.”

Al the povere peple tho  
 Pescoddes fetten,  
 Benes and baken apples  
 Thei broghte in hir lappes,  
 Chibolles and chervelles,  
 And ripe chiries manye,  
 And profrede Piers this present     4391



To plesse with Hunger. 4392

Al Hunger eet in haste,  
 And axed after moore.  
 Thanne povere folk, for fere,  
 Fedden Hunger yerne,  
 With grene poret and pesen,  
 To poisons hym thei thoghte.  
 By that it neghed neer hervest,  
 And newe corn cam to chepyng;  
 Thanne was folk fayn,  
 And fedde Hunger with the beste,  
 With goode ale, as Gloton taghte,  
 And garte Hunger go slepe.

And tho wolde Wastour noght  
 But wandren aboute, [werche,  
 Ne no beggere ete breed  
 That benes inne were,  
 But of coket and cler-matyn,  
 Or ellis of clene whete;  
 Ne noon halfpenny ale  
 In none wise drynke, [neste  
 But of the beste and of the brun-  
 That in burghe is to selle. 4414

Laborers that have no land  
 To lyve on but hire handes,  
 Deyned noght to dyne a day  
 Nyght-olde wortes;  
 May no penny ale hem paye,  
 Ne no pece of bacon,  
 But if it be fresshe flessch outhur  
 Fryed outhur y-bake, [fisshe,  
 And that *chaud* and *plus chaud*,  
 For chillynge of hir mawe;  
 And but if he be heighliche hyred;

Ellis wole he chide, 4426  
 And that he was werkman wroght  
 Waille the tyme,  
 Ayeins Catons counseil  
 Comseth he to jangle.  
*Paupertatis onus patienter ferre me-*  
*mento.*

He greveth hym ageyn God,  
 And gruccheth ageyn Reson,  
 And thanne corseth he the kyng,  
 And al his counseil after,  
 Swiche lawes to loke 4437  
 Laborers to greve.  
 Ac whiles Hunger was hir maister,  
 Ther wolde noon of hem chide,  
 Ne stryven ayeins his statut,  
 So sterneliche he loked.

Ac I warne yow, werkmen,  
 Wynneth whil ye mowe,  
 For Hunger hiderward  
 Hasteth hym faste.  
 He shal a-wake with water  
 Wastours to chaste ;  
 Er fyve be fulfilled,  
 Swich famyn shal a-ryse,  
 Thorough flodes and thorough foule  
 Fruytes shul faille, [wedres  
 And so seide Saturne,  
 And sente yow to warne.

Whan ye se the sonne a-mys,  
 And two monkes heddes,  
 And a mayde have the maistrie,  
 And multiplie by eghte,  
 Thanne shal deeth with-drawe, 4459

*PIERS PLOUGHMAN.* 137

And derthe be justice, 4460  
And Dawe the dykere  
Deye for hunger ;  
But God of his goodnesse  
Graunte us a trewe. 4464





*Passus Septimus de Visione, ut  
supra.*

**T**REUTHE herde telle her  
And to Piers he sente,  
To maken his teme  
And tilien the erthe,  
And purchaced hym a pardone  
*A pœna et a culpa,*  
For hym and for hise heires,  
For evere moore after,  
And bad hym holde hym at home,  
And erien hise leyes.  
And alle that holpen hym to eryl,  
To sette or to sowe,  
Or any oother mestier 4477  
That myghte Piers availle,  
Pardon with Piers Plowman  
Truthe hath y-graunted.  
Kynges and knyghtes,  
That kepen holy chirche,  
And rightfully in remes  
Rulen the peple,  
Han pardon thorough purgatorie  
To passen ful lightly,  
With patriarkes and prophetes  
In paradys to be felawe. 4483

Bysshopes y-blessed, 4489  
 If thei ben as thei sholde,  
 Legistres of bothe lawes,  
 The lewed therwith to preehe,  
 And in as mueche as thei mowe  
 Amenden alle synfulle,  
 Arn peres with the Apostles,  
 This pardon Piers sheweth,  
 And at the day of dome  
 At the heighe deys sitte.

Marchauntz in the margyne  
 Hadde manye yeres, 4500  
 Ae noon *a poena et a culpa*  
 The pope nolde hem graunte,  
 For thei holde noght hir hali-dayes  
 As holy ehirche teetheth,  
 And for thei swere by hir soule,  
 And so God moste hem helpe,  
 Ayein clene Conseience,  
 Hir eatel to selle.

Ae under his seeret seel  
 Truthe sente hem a lettre,  
 That thei sholde buggen boldely  
 That hem best liked,  
 And sithenes selle it ayein,  
 And save the wynnyng,  
 And amende meson-dieux thermyd,  
 And mys-eise folk helpe,  
 And wikkede weyes  
 Wightly amende,  
 And do boote to brugges  
 That to-broke were,  
 Marien maydenes,  
 Or maken hem nonnes, 4522

Povere peple and prisons      4523  
 Fynden hem hir foode,  
 And sette scolers to scole,  
 Or to som othere craftes,  
 Releve religion,  
 And renten hem bettre ;  
 “ And I shal sende yow myselve  
 Seint Michel myn archangel,  
 That no devel shal yow dere,  
 Ne fere yow in youre deying,  
 And witen yow fro wanhope,  
 If ye wol thus werche,      4534  
 And sende youre soules in saufté  
 To my seintes in joye.”

    Thanne were marchauntz murie,  
 Many wepten for joye,  
 And preiseden Piers the Plowman,  
 That purchaced this bulle.

    Men of lawe leest pardon hadde,  
 That pleteden for Mede ;  
 For the Sauter saveth hem noght,  
 Swiche as take giftes,  
 And nameliche of innocentz      4545  
 That noon yvel ne konneth.  
*Super innocentem munera non ac-*  
*cipies.*

    Pledours sholde peynen hem  
 To plede for swiche and helpe ;  
 Princes and prelates  
 Sholde paie for hire travaille.  
*A regibus et principibus erit merces*  
*eorum.*

    Ac many a justice and jurour  
 Wolde for Johan do moore      4556

Than *pro Dei pietate*, 4557  
Leve thow noon oother.

Ac he that spendeth his speche,  
And speketh for the povere  
That is innocent and nedy,  
And no man apeireth,  
Conforteth hym in that caas  
Withouten coveitise of giftes,  
And sheweth lawe for ourc Lordes  
As he it hath y-lerned, [love,  
Shal no devel at his deeth day  
Deren hym a myte, 4568  
That he ne worth saaf and his soule,  
The Sauter bereth witnesse :  
*Domine, quis habitabit in taberna-*  
*culo tuo ?*

Ac to bugge water, ne wynd,  
Ne wit, ne fir the ferthe,  
Thise foure the fader of hevene  
Made to this foold in commune.  
Thise ben Truthes tresores  
Trewe folk to helpe,  
That nevere shul wexe ne wanye,  
Withouten God hymselfe.

Whan thei drawn on to deye,  
And indulgences wolde have,  
Hir pardon is ful petit  
At hir partyng hennes,  
That any mede of mene men  
For hir motyng taketh.  
Ye legistres and lawieres,  
Holdeth this for truthe,  
That if that I lye,  
Mathew is to blame, 4590

For he bad me make yow this, 4591  
 And this proverbe me tolde,  
*Quodcunque vultis ut faciant vobis  
 homines, facite eis.*

Alle libbynge laborers  
 That lyven with hir hondes,  
 That treweliche taken,  
 And treweliche wynnen,  
 And lyven in love and in lawe,  
 For hir lowe hertes  
 Haveth the same absolucion  
 That sent was to Piers. 4602

Beggeres ne bidderes  
 Ne beth noght in the bulle,  
 But if the suggestion be sooth  
 That shapeth hem to begge.  
 For he that beggeth or bit,  
 But if he have nede,  
 He is fals with the feend,  
 And defraudeth the nedy ;  
 And also he bi-gileth the gyvere,  
 Ageynes his wille ;  
 For if he wiste he were noght nedy,  
 He wolde gyve that another  
 That were moore nedy than he,  
 So the nedieste sholde be holpe.  
 Caton kenneth me thus,  
 And the clerc of stories ;  
*Cui des videto,*  
 Is Catons techyng.

And in the stories he techeth  
 To bistowe thyn almesse.  
*Sit elemosina tua in manu tua,  
 donec studes cui des.* 4624



Ac Gregory was a good man, <sup>4625</sup>  
 And bad us gyven alle  
 That asketh for his love  
 That us al leneth.

*Non eligas cui miserearis, ne forte  
 prætereas illum qui meretur  
 accipere. Quia incertum est  
 pro quo Deo magis placeas.*

For wite ye nevere who is worthi,  
 Ac God woot who hath nede ;  
 In hym that taketh is the trecherie,  
 If any treson walke. <sup>4636</sup>

For he that yeveth, yeldeth,  
 And yarketh hym to reste ;  
 And he that biddeth, borweth,  
 And bryngeth hymself in dette.  
 For beggeres borwen evere mo,  
 And hir borgh is God almyghty,  
 To yelden hem that yeveth hem,  
 And yet usure moore.

*Quare non dedisti pecuniam meam  
 ad mensam, ut ego veniam cum  
 usuris exigere ?* <sup>4647</sup>

For-thi biddeth noght, ye beg-  
 But if ye have gret nede ; [geres,  
 For who so hath to buggen hym  
 The book bereth witnesse, [breed,  
 He hath y-nough that hath breed  
 y-nough,

Though he have noght ellis.  
*Satis dives est, qui non indiget pane.*

Lat usage be youre solas,  
 Of seintes lyves redyng,  
 The book banneth beggerie, <sup>4657</sup>

And blameth hem in this manere: 4658  
*Junior fui, et jam senui, et non vidi  
 justum derelictum, nec semen  
 ejus, etc.*

For ye lyve in no love,  
 Ne no lawe holde;  
 Manye of yow ne wedde noght  
 The womman that ye with deele,  
 But as wilde bestes with 'wehee!'  
 Worthen uppe and werchen,  
 And bryngen forth barnes,  
 That bastardes men calleth; 4669  
 Or the bak or som boon  
 He breketh in his youthe,  
 And siththe goon faiten with youre  
 For evere moore after. [fauntes  
 Ther is moore mys-shapen peple  
 Amonges thise beggeres,  
 Than of alle manere men  
 That on this moolde walketh.  
 And thei that lyve thus hir lif,  
 Mowe lothe the tyme  
 That evere thei were men wroght,  
 Whan thei shal hennes fare.  
 Ac olde men and hore,  
 Than help-lees ben of strengthe,  
 And wommen with childe  
 That werche ne mowe,  
 Blynde and bed-reden,  
 And broken hire membres,  
 That taken thise myschiefs meke-  
 As mesels and othere, [liche,  
 Han as pleyn pardon  
 As the plowman hymselfe. 4691

For love of hir lowe hertes, 4692  
Oure Lord hath hem graunted  
Hir penaunce and hir purgatorie  
Here on this erthe.

“Piers,” quod a preest thoo,  
“Thi pardon moste I rede ;  
For I wol construe ech clause,  
And kenne it thee on Englisshe.”

And Piers at his preiere  
The pardon unfoldeth ;  
And I by-hynde hem bothe  
Biheld al the bulle, 4703  
And in two lynes it lay,  
And noght a leef more,  
And was writen right thus,  
In witnesse of Truthe :

*Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam  
eternam.*

*Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.*

“Peter,” quod the preest thoo,  
“I kan no pardon fynde,  
But do wel and have wel,  
And God shal have thi soule, 4714  
And do yvel and have yvel,  
Hope thow noon oother,  
But after thi deeth-day  
The devel shal have thi soule.”

And Piers for pure tene  
Pulled it a-tweyne,  
And seide *Si ambulavero in medio  
umbræ mortis, non timebo mala,  
quoniam tu mecum es.*

“I shal cessen of my sowyng,”  
quod Piers, 4725

“And swynkenoght so harde, 4726  
 Ne aboute my bely joye  
 So bisy be na-moore ;  
 Of preieres and of penaunce  
 My plough shal ben hereafter,  
 And wepen whan I sholde slepe,  
 Though whete-breed me faille.

“The prophete his payn eet  
 In penaunce and in sorwe,  
 By that the Sauter seith,  
 So dide othere manye ;  
 That loveth God lelly, 4737  
 His liflode is ful esy.

*Fuerunt mihi lacrimæ meæ panes  
 die ac nocte.*

“And but if Luc lye,  
 He lereth us by foweles,  
 We sholde noght be to bisy  
 Aboute the worldes blisse ;  
*Ne solliciti sitis,*  
 He seith in the Gospel,  
 And sheweth us by ensamples  
 Us selve to wisse. 4748  
 The foweles in the feld,  
 Who fynt hem mete at wynter ?  
 Have thei no gerner to go to,  
 But God fynt hem alle.”

“What !” quod the preest to  
 “Peter ! as me thynketh, [Perkyn,  
 Thow art lettred a litel :—  
 Who lerned thee on boke ?”

“Abstynence the abbesse,” quod  
 “Myn a.b.c. me taughte ; [Piers,  
 And Conscience cam afterward,  
 And kenned me mucche moore.” 4760

“ Were thow a preest,” quod he,  
 “ Thou myghtest preche where thou  
 As divinour in divinité, {sholdest,  
 With *Dixit insipiens* to thi teme.”

“ Lewed lorel ! ” quod Piers,  
 “ Litel lokestow on the Bible ;  
 On Salomons sawes  
 Selden thow biholdest :  
*Ejice derisores et jurgia cum eis, ne  
 crescant, etc.*”

The preest and Perkyn  
 Opposeden either oother. 4772  
 And I thorough hir wordes a-wook,  
 And waited aboute,  
 And seigh the sonne in the south  
 Sitte that tyme,  
 Mete-lees and monei-lees  
 On Malverne hulles,  
 Musynge on this metels,  
 And my wey ich yede.

MANY tyme this metels  
 Hath maked me to studie  
 Of that I seigh slepynge,  
 If it so be myghte,  
 And also for Piers the Plowman  
 Ful pencif in herte,  
 And which a pardon Piers hadde  
 Al the peple to conforte,  
 And how the preest impugned it  
 With two propre wordes.  
 Ac I have no savour in songewarie,  
 For I se it ofte faille ;  
 Caton and canonistres  
 Counseillen us to leve 4794

To sette sadnesse in songewarie, 4795  
 For *sompnia ne cures*.

Ac for the book Bible  
 Bereth witnesse  
 How Daniel divined  
 The dreem of a kyng,  
 That was Nabugodonosor  
 Nempned of clerkes.

Daniel seide, "Sire kyng,  
 Thi dremels bitokneth  
 That unkouth knyghtes shul come  
 Thi kyngdom to cleyme ; 4806  
 Amonges lower lordes  
 Thi lond shal be departed."  
 And as Daniel divined,  
 In dede it fel after ;  
 The kyng lees his lordshipe,  
 And lower men it hadde.

And Joseph mette merveillously  
 How the moone and the sonne  
 And the ellevene sterres  
 Hailsed hym alle.

Thanne Jacob jugged 4817  
 Josephes swevene.  
 "Beau fitz," quod his fader,  
 "For defaute we shullen,  
 I myself and my sones,  
 Seche thee for nede."

It bifel as his fader seide,  
 In Pharaoes tyme,  
 That Joseph was justice  
 Egipte to loke ;  
 It bifel as his fader tolde,  
 Hise frendes there hym soughte,  
 And al this maketh me 4829

On this metels to thynke. 4830  
 And how the preest preved  
 No pardon to Do-wel,  
 And demed that Do-wel  
 Indulgences passed,  
 Biennals and triennals,  
 And bisshopes lettres ;  
 And how Do-wel at the day of dome  
 Is digneliche underfongen,  
 And passeth al the pardon  
 Of seint Petres cherche.

Now hath the pope power 4841  
 Pardon to graunte the peple,  
 Withouten any penaunce  
 To passen into hevene ;  
 This is oure bileve,  
 As lettred men us techeth :  
*Quodcumque ligaveris super ter-*  
*ram, erit ligatum et in cœlis,*  
*etc.*

And so I leve leelly,  
 Lordes forbode ellis !  
 That pardon and penaunce 4852  
 And preieres doon save  
 Soules that have synned  
 Seven sithes dedly ;  
 Ac to truste to thise triennals,  
 Trewely me thynketh,  
 Is noght so siker for the soule,  
 Certes, as is Do-wel.

For-thi I rede yow, renkes,  
 That riche ben on this erthe,  
 Upon trust of youre tresor  
 Triennals to have,  
 Be ye never the bolder 4864

To breake the .x. hestes ;      4865  
 And namely ye maistres,  
 Meires and jugges,  
 That have the welthe of this world  
 And for wise men ben holden,  
 To purchace yow pardon  
 And the popes bulles.  
 At the dredful dome,  
 Whan dede shulle rise,  
 And comen alle to-fore Crist  
 Acountes to yelde,  
 How thow laddest thi lif here,      4876  
 And hise lawes keptest,  
 And how thow didest day by day,  
 The doom wole reherce.  
 A poke ful of pardon there,  
 Ne provincials lettres,  
 Theigh ye be founde in the fraternité  
 Of alle the foure ordres,  
 And have indulgences double-fold,  
 But if Do-wel yow helpe,  
 I sette youre patentés and youre  
 At one pies hele.      [pardon  
     For-thi I counseille alle Cristene  
 To crie God mercy,  
 And Marie his moder  
 Be oure meene bitwene,  
 That God gyve us grace here,  
 Er we go hennes,  
 Swiche werkes to werche  
 While we ben here,  
 That after oure deeth-day  
 Do-wel reherce  
 At the day of dome,  
 We dide as he highte.      4899





*Passus Octavus de Visione, et  
Primus de Do-wel.*

**T**HUS y-robed in russet 4900  
I romed aboute  
Al a somer seson  
For to seke Do-wel ;

And frayned ful ofte  
Of folk that I mette,  
If any wight wiste  
Wher Do-wel was at inne ;  
And what man he myghte be  
Of many man I asked.

Was nevere wight, as I wente,  
That me wisse kouth 4911  
Where this leode lenged,  
Lasse ne moore ;  
Til it bi-fel on a Friday  
Two freres I mette,  
Maistres of the menours,  
Men of grete witte.  
I hailed hem hendely,  
As I hadde y-lerned,  
And preide hem *par charité*,  
Er thei passed ferther,  
If thei knewe any contree  
Or costes, as thei wente, 4923

"Where that Do-wel dwelleth 4924  
Dooth me to witene."

For thei be men of this moolde  
That moost wide walken,  
And knowen contrees and courtes,  
And many kynnes places,  
Bothe princes paleises  
And povere mennes cotes,  
And Do-wel and Do-yuele  
Wher thei dwelle bothe.

"Amonges us," quod the Me-  
"That man is dwellynge, [nours,  
And evere hath, as I hope,  
And evere shal herafter."

"*Contra*," quod I as a clerc,  
And comsed to disputen,  
And seide hem soothly,  
"*Septies in die cadit justus*."

Sevene sithes, seith the book,  
Synneth the rightfulle ;  
And who so synneth," I seide,  
"Dooth yuele, as me thynketh ;  
And Do-wel and Do-yuele 4946  
Mowe noght dwelle togideres.  
*Ergo* he nys noght alwey  
Amonges yow freres ;  
He is outhere while ellis where  
To wisse the peple."

"I shal seye thee, my sone,"  
Seide the frere thanne,  
"How seven sithes the sadde man  
On a day synneth ;  
By a forbisne," quod the frere,  
"I shal thee faire shewe. 4957

Lat brynge a man in a boot 4958

Amydde the brode watre,

The wynd and the water

And the boot waggyng

Maketh the man many a tyme

To falle and to stonde ;

For stonde he never so stif,

He stumbleth if he meve,

Ac yet is he saaf and sound,

And so hym bihoveth.

For if he ne arise the rather,

And raughte to the steere, 4969

The wynd wolde with the water

The boot over throwe ;

And thanne were his lif lost,

Through lachesse of hymselfe.

“And thus it falleth,” quod the frere,

“By folk here on erthe ;

The water is likned to the world

That wanyeth and wexeth ;

The goodes of this grounde arn lik

To the grete wawes,

That as wyndes and wedres 4980

Walketh aboute ;

The boot is likned to oure body

That brotel is of kynde,

That thorough the fend and the flesshe

And the frele worlde

Synneth the sadde man

A day seven sithes.

“Ac dedly synne doth he noght,

For Do-wel hym kepeth ;

And that is charité the champion,

Chief help ayein synne ; 4991

For he strengeth men to stonde,<sup>4992</sup>  
 And steereth mannes soule,  
 And though the body bowe  
 As boot dooth in the watre,  
 Ay is thi soule saaf,  
 But if thow wole thiselwe  
 Do a deedly synne,  
 And drenche so thi soule,  
 God wole suffre wel thi sleuthe,  
 If thiself liketh.

For he yaf thee a yeres-gyve,  
 To yeme wel thiselwe, 5003  
 And that is wit and free-wil,  
 To every wight a porcion,  
 To fleyng foweles,  
 To fisshes and to beestes ;  
 Ac man hath moost therof,  
 And moost is to blame,  
 But if he werche wel therwith,  
 As Do-wel hym teacheth." [quod I,  
 "I have no kynde knowyng,"  
 "To conceyven alle youre wordes ;  
 Ac if I may lyve and loke, 5014  
 I shal go lerne better."

"I bikenne thee Crist," quod he,  
 "That on cros deyde !"  
 And I seide, "The same  
 Save yow fro myschaunce,  
 And gyve yow grace on this grounde  
 Goode men to worthe !"

**A**ND thus I wente wide wher  
 Walkyng myn one,  
 By a wilde wilderness, 5024

And by a wodes side ; 5025  
Blisse of the briddes  
Broughte me a-slepe,  
And under a lynde upon a launde  
Lened I a stounde,  
To lythe the layes  
Tho lovely foweles made.  
Murthe of hire mouthes  
Made me ther to slepe ;  
The marveillouseste metels  
Mette me thanne  
That ever dremed wight 5036  
In world, as I wene.

A muche man, as me thoughte,  
And lik to myselve,  
Cam and called me  
By my kynde name.

“What artow?” quod I tho,  
“That thow my name knowest.”

“That thou woost wel,” quod he,  
“And no wight better.”

“Woot I what thow art?”  
“Thought,” seide he thanne ; 5047  
“I have sued thee this seven yeer,  
Seye thow me no rather.”

“Artow Thought,” quod I thoo,  
“Thow koudest me wisse,  
Where that Do-wel dwelleth,  
And do me that to knowe.”

“Do-wel and Do-bet,  
And Do-best the thridde,” quod he,  
“Arn thre fair vertues,  
And ben noght fer to fynde.  
Whe so is trewe of his tunge, 5058

And of his two handes, 5059  
 And thorough his labour, or thorough  
 His liflode wynneth, [his land,  
 And is trusty of his tailende,  
 Taketh but his owene,  
 And his noght dronklewe ne dedey-  
 Do-wel hym folweth. [nous,

“Do-bet dooth right thus :

Ac he dooth mucche moore ;  
 He is as lowe as a lomb,  
 And lovelich of speche,  
 And helpeth alle men 5070  
 After that hem nedeth.

The bagges and the bigirdles,  
 He hath to-broke hem alle,  
 That the erl Avarous  
 Heeld and hise heires.  
 And thus with Mammonaes moneie  
 He hath maad hym frendes,  
 And is ronne to religion,  
 And hath rendred the Bible,  
 And precheth to the peple  
 Seint Poules wordes : 5081

*Libenter suffertis insipientes, cum  
 sitis ipsi sapientes.*

“And suffreth the unwise  
 With yow for to libbe ;  
 And with glad wille dooth hem good,  
 For so God yow hoteth.

“Do-best is above bothe,  
 And bereth a bisshopes crosse,  
 Is hoked on that oon ende  
 To halie men fro helle ;  
 A pik is on that potente, 5092

To putte a-down the wikked 5093  
That waiten any wikkednesse  
Do-wel to tene.

And Do-wel and Do-bet  
Amonges hem han ordeyned,  
To crowne oon to be kyng  
To rulen hem bothe ;  
That if Do-wel or Do-bet  
Dide ayein Do-best,  
Thanne shal the kyng come  
And casten hem in irens,  
And but if Do-best bede for hem,  
Thei to be ther for evere.

“Thus Do-wel and Do-bet,  
And Do-best the thridde,  
Crouned oon to the kyng  
To kepen hem alle,  
And to rule the reme  
By hire thre wittes,  
And noon oother wise  
But as thei thre assented.”

I thonked Thoght tho,  
That he me thus taughte. 5115  
“Ac yet savoreth me noght thi sey-  
I coveite to lerne [ing ;  
How Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best  
Doon among the peple.”

“But Wit konne wissethee,” quod  
“Wher tho thre dwelle, [Thoght,  
Ellis woot I noon that kan  
That now is alyve.”

Thoght and I thus  
Thre daies we yeden,  
Disputyng upon Do-wel 5126

Day after oother ; 5127  
And ere we were war,  
With Wit gonne we mete.  
He was long and lene,  
Lik to noon other ;  
Was no pride on his apparaille,  
Ne poverte neither ;  
Sad of his semblaunt,  
And of softe chere.  
I dorste meve no matere  
To maken hym to jangle,  
But as I bad Thoght thoo 5138  
Be mene bitwene,  
And pute forth som purpos  
To preven hise wittes,  
What was Do-wel fro Do-bet,  
And Do-best from hem bothe.  
Thanne Thoght in that tyme  
Seide thise wordes :  
“ Where Do-wel, Do-bet,  
And Do-best ben in londe,  
Here is Wil wolde wite,  
If Wit koude teche hym ;  
And wheither he be man or womman  
This man fayn wolde asprie,  
And werchen as thei thre wolde,  
Thus is his entente.” 5153





*Passus Nonus de Visione, ut supra,  
et Primus de Do-bet.*

**S**IRE Do-wel dwelleth,"  
[quod Wit, 5154  
"Noght a day hennes,  
In a castel that Kynde made  
Of four kynnes thynges ;  
Of erthe and of eyr it is maad,  
Medled togideres,  
With wynd and with water  
Witterly enjoyned.  
Kynde hath closed therinne  
Craftily withalle  
A lemman that he loveth  
Lik to hymselfe ; 5165  
*Anima* she hatte.  
Ac envye hir hateth,  
A proud prikere of Fraunce,  
*Princeps hujus mundi*,  
And wolde wynne hire away  
With wiles, and he myghte.  
"Ac Kynde knoweth this wel,  
And kepeth hire the better,  
And dooth hire with sire Do-wel,  
Is duc of thise marches.  
"Do-bet is hire damyselle,  
Sire Do-weles doughter, 5177

To serven this lady leelly      5178  
Bothe late and rathe.

“Do-best is above bothe,  
A bisshopes peere ;  
That he bit moot be do,  
He ruleth hem alle.  
*Anima*, that lady,  
Is lad by his leryng.  
Ac the constable of that castel,  
That kepeth al the wacche,  
Is a wis knyght withalle,

Sire Inwit he hatte,      5189  
And hathe fyve faire sones  
Bi his firste wyve ;  
Sire Se-wel, and Sey-wel,  
And Here-wel the hende,  
Sire Werch-wel-with-thyn-hand,  
A wight man of strengthe,  
And sire Godefray Go-wel ;  
Grete lordes, for sothe.

Thise fyve ben set  
To kepe this lady *Anima*,  
Til Kynde come or sende      5200  
To saven hire for evere.” [quod I,

“What kynnes thyng is Kynde?”  
“Kanstow me telle?” [tour

“Kynde,” quod Wit, “is a crea-  
Of alle kynnes thynges,  
Fader and formour  
Of al that evere was maked ;  
And that is the grete God  
That gynnyng hadde nevere,  
Lord of lif and of light,  
Of lisse and of peyne.      5211

Aungeles and alle thyng                    5212  
 Arn at his wille ;  
 Ac man is hym moost lik  
 Of marc and of shafte ;  
 For thorough the word that he spak  
 Woxen forth beestes.

*Dixit et facta sunt.*

“ And made man likkest  
 To hymself one,  
 And Eve of his ryb-bon,  
 Withouten any mene,  
 For he was synguler hymself ;    5223  
 And seide *faciamus*,  
 As who seith moore moot herto  
 Than my word oone,  
 My myght moot helpe  
 Forth with my speche.  
 Right as a lord sholde make lettres,  
 And hym lakked parchemyn,  
 Though he koude write never so wel,  
 If he hadde no penne,  
 The lettre, for al the lordshipe,  
 I leve were nevere y-maked.    5234

“ And so it semeth by hym,  
 As the Bible telleth,  
 There he seide *Dixit et facta sunt*,  
 He moste werche with his word,  
 And his wit shewe.  
 And in this manere was man maad,  
 Thorough myght of God almighty,  
 With his word and werkmanshipe,  
 And with lif to laste.  
 And thus God gaf hym a goost,  
 Thorough the godhede of hevene,    5245

And of his grete grace 5246  
 Graunted hym blisse,  
 And that is lif that ay shal laste  
 To al his lynage after.  
 And that is the castel that Kynde  
*Caro* it hatte, [made,  
 And is as muche to mene  
 As man with a soule ;  
 And that he wroghte with werk,  
 And with word bothe,  
 Thorgh myght of the magesté  
 Man was y-maked. 5257

“ Inwit and alle wittes  
 Closed ben therinne,  
 For love of the lady *Anima*,  
 That lif is y-nempned ;  
 Over al in mannes body  
 He walketh and wandreth.  
 And in the herte is hir hoom  
 And hir mooste reste.

“ Ac Inwit is in the heed,  
 And to the herte he loketh ;  
 What *Anima* is leef or looth, 5268  
 He lat hire at his wille ;  
 For after the grace of God, '  
 The grettteste is Inwit.

“ Muche wo worth that man  
 That mys-ruleth his Inwit ;  
 And that ben glotons glubberes,  
 Hir God is hire wombe.  
*Quorum deus venter est.*

“ For thei serven Sathan,  
 Hir soules shal he have.  
 That lyven synful lif here, 5279

Hir soule is lich the devil ; 5280  
 And alle that lyven good lif  
 Are lik to God almyghty,  
*Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet,*  
*etc.*

“Alas ! that drynke shal for-do  
 That God deere boughte,  
 And dooth God forsaken hem  
 That he shoop to his liknesse.  
*Amen dico vobis, nescio vos. Et alibi :*  
*Et dimisi eos secundum desideria*  
*eorum.* 5291

“Fools that fauten Inwit,  
 I fynde that holy chirche  
 Sholde fynden hem that hem fauted,  
 And fader-lese children,  
 And widewes that han noght wher-  
 To wynnen hem hir foode, [with  
 Madde men, and maydenes  
 That help-lese were,  
 Alle thise lakken Inwit,  
 And loore bihoveth.

“Of this matere I myghte 5302  
 Make a long tale,  
 And fynde fele witnesses  
 Among the foure doctours ;  
 And that I lye noght of that I lere  
 Luc bereth wisesse. [thee,

“God-fadres and god-modres,  
 That seen hire god-children  
 At mys-eise and at myschief,  
 And mowe hem amende,  
 Shul have penaunce in purgatorie  
 But thei hem helpe. 5713

Formoore bilongeth to the litel barn,  
 Er he the lawe knowe,  
 Than nempnyng of a name,  
 And he never the wiser.  
 Sholde no cristene creature  
 Cryen at the yate,  
 Ne faille payn ne potage,  
 And prelates dide as thei sholden.  
 A Jew wolde noght se a Jew  
 Go janglyng for defaute,  
 For alle the mebles on this moolde,  
 And he amende it myghte. 5325

“Alas! that a cristene creature  
 Shal be unkynde til another;  
 Syn Jewes, that we jugge  
 Judas felawes,  
 Eyther of hem helpeth oother  
 Of that that hem nedeth.  
 Whi nel we cristene  
 Of Cristes good be as kynde  
 As Jewes, that ben oure lores-men?  
 Shame to us alle!  
 The commune for hir unkyndenesse,  
 I drede me, shul abyе.

“Bisshopes shul be blamed  
 For beggeres sake.  
 He is wors than Judas,  
 That gyveth a japer silver,  
 And biddeth the beggere go,  
 For his broke clothes.

*Proditor est prælatus cum Juda,  
 qui patrimonium Christi mimis  
 distribuit. Et alibi: Perni-  
 ciosus dispensator est, qui res*

*pauperum Christi inutiliter  
consumit.*

“He dooth noght wel that dooth  
thus,

Ne drat noght God almyghty ;  
He loveth noght Salomons sawes,  
That sapience taughte.

*Initium sapientie, timor Domini.*

“That dredeth God, he dooth wel ;  
That dredeth him for love,  
And noght for drede of vengeaunce,  
Dooth therfore the bettre.

“He dooth best that with-draweth  
By daye and by nyghte, [hym  
To spille any speche  
Or any space of tyme.

*Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est  
reus.*

“Lesynge of tyme,  
Truthe woot the sothe,  
Is moost y-hated upon erthe  
Of hem that ben in hevene ;  
And siththe to spille speche, 5369  
That spicerie is of grace,  
And Goddes gle-man,  
And a game of hevene.  
Wolde nevere the feithful fader  
This fithle were un-tempred,  
Ne his gle-man a gedelyng,  
A goere to tavernes.

“To alle trewe tidy men  
That travaille desiren,  
Oure Lord loveth hem and lent  
Loude outhur stille 5380

Grace to go to hem, 5381  
 And of-gon hir liflode.  
*Inquirentes autem Dominum non  
 minuenter omni bono.*

“Trewe wedded libbynge folk  
 In this world is Do-wel,  
 For thei mote werche and wyne,  
 And the world sustene.  
 For of hir kynde thei come  
 That confessours ben nempned,  
 Kynges and knyghtes,  
 Kayzers and cherles, 5392  
 Maidenés and martires,  
 Out of o man come.  
 The wif was maad the weye  
 For to helpe werche ;  
 And thus was wedlok y-wroght  
 With a mene persone,  
 First, by the fadres wille,  
 And the frendes conseille ;  
 And sithenes by assent of hemself,  
 As thei two myghte acorde.  
 And thus was wedlok y-wroght,  
 And God hymself it made  
 In erthe and in hevene,  
 Hymself bereth witnesse.

“Ac fals folk feyth-lees,  
 Theves and lyeres,  
 Wastours and wrecches,  
 Out of wedlok, I trowe,  
 Conceyved ben in yvel tyme,  
 As Caym was on Eve ;  
 Of swiche synfulle sherewes  
 The Sauter maketh mynde : 5414



*Concepit in dolore, et peperit iniquitatem, etc.*

“And alle that come of that Caym,  
Come to yvel ende.  
And God sente to Seem,  
And seide by an aungel,  
‘Thyn issue in thyn issue  
I wol that thei be wedded,  
And noght thi kynde with Caymes  
Y-coupled nor y-spoused.’

“Yet some, ayein the sonde  
Of oure Saveour of hevene, 5426  
Caymes kynde and his kynde  
Coupled togideres,  
Til God wrathed for hir werkes,  
And swich a word seide,  
‘That I makede man  
It me for-thynketh.’

*Pœnitēt me fecisse hominem.*

“And com to Noe anon,  
And bad hym noght lette :  
‘Swith go shape a ship  
Of shides and of bordes ; 5437  
Thyself and thi sones,  
And sithen youre wyves,  
Busketh yow to that boot,  
And bideth ye therinne,  
Til fourty daies be fulfild,  
That the flood have y-wasshen  
Clene away the corsed blood  
That Caym hath y-maked.

“‘Beestes that now ben  
Shul banne the tyme  
That evere that cursed Caym 5443

Coom on this erthe ; 5449  
 Alle shul deye for hise dedes,  
 By dales and by hulles,  
 And the foweles that fleen  
 Forth with othere beestes,  
 Excepte oonliche  
 Of ech kynde a couple,  
 That in thi shyngled ship  
 Shul ben y-saved.'

Here a-boughte the barn  
 The bel-sires giltyes,  
 And alle for hir fadres 5460  
 Thei ferden the werse ;  
 The Gospel is her ayein,  
 In o degré, I fynde :

*Filius non portabit iniquitatem pa-  
 tris, et pater non portabit ini-  
 quitatem filii, etc.*

"Ac I fynde if the fader  
 Be fals and a sherewe,  
 That som del the sone  
 Shal have the sires tacches.

"Impe on an ellere, 5471  
 And if thyn appul be swete,  
 Muchel merveille me thynketh ;  
 And moore of a sherewe  
 That bryngeth forth any barn,  
 But if he be the same,  
 And have a savour after the sire ;  
 Selde sestow oother.

*Nunquam colligitur de spinis uva,  
 nec de tribulis ficus.*

"And thus thorough cursed Caym  
 Cam care upon erthe ; 5482

PIERS PLOUGHMAN. 169

And al for thei wroghte wedlokes 5483  
Ayein Goddes wille.

For-thi have thei maugré of hir ma-  
That marie so hir children. [riages

For some, as I se now,

Sooth for to telle,

For coveitise of catel

Un-kyndely ben wedded ;

As careful conception

Cometh of swiche mariages,

As bi-fel of the folk

That I bifore of tolde, 5494

Therefore goode sholde wedde goode,

Though thei no good hadde ;

‘I am *via et veritas*,’ seith Crist,

‘I may avaunce yow alle.’

“It is an uncomly couple,

By Crist ! as me thynketh,

To yeven a yong wenche

To an old feble,

Or wedden any wodewe

For welthe of hir goodes,

That nevere shal barn bere 5505

But if it be in hir armes.

Many a peire, sithen the pestilence,

Han plight hem tgideres,

The fruyt that brynge forth

Arn foule wordes,

In jelousie joye-lees,

And janglynge on bedde,

Have thei no children but cheeste,

And clappyng hem bitwene.

And though thei do hem to Dun-

But if the devel helpe, [mowe,

To folwen after the flicche,     5517  
 Fecche thei it nevere ;  
 And but thi bothe be for-swore,  
 That bacon thei tyne.

“ For-thei I counseille alle cristene  
 Coveite noght be wedded  
 For coveitise of catel,  
 Ne of kyn-rede riche ;  
 Ac maidenenes and maydenenes  
 Macche yow togideres,  
 Wodewes and wideweres  
 Wercheth the same ;     5528  
 For no londes, but for love,  
 Loke ye be wedded,  
 And thanne gcte yethe grace of God,  
 And good y-nough to lyve with.

“ And every maner seculer  
 That may noght continue,  
 Wisely goo wedde,  
 And ware hym fro synne ;  
 For lecherie in likyng  
 Is lyme-yerd of helle.  
 Whiles thow art yong,     5539  
 And thi wepene kene,  
 Wreke thee with wyvyng,  
 If thow wolt ben excused.  
*Dum sis vir fortis,*  
*Ne des tua robora scortis ;*  
*Scribitur in portis,*  
*Meretrix est janua mortis.*

“ Whan ye han wyved, beth war  
 And wercheth in tyme ;  
 Noght as Adam and Eve,  
 Whan Caym was engendred.     5550

For in un-tyme, trewely, 5551  
 Bitwene man and womman,  
 Ne sholde no bourde or bedde be ;  
 But if thei bothe were clene  
 Bothe of lif and of soule,  
 And in perfit charité,  
 That ilke derne dede do  
 No man ne sholde.

And if thei leden thus hir lif,  
 It liketh God almyghty ;  
 For he made wedlok first,  
 And hymself it seide : 5562

*Bonum est ut unusquisque uxorem  
 suam habeat, propter fornicationem.* [geten

“And thei that other gates ben  
 For gedelynges arn holden,  
 As fals folk fondlynges,  
 Faitours and lieres,  
 Ungracious to gete good  
 Or love of the peple,  
 Wandren and wasten  
 What thei cacche mowe, 5573  
 Ayeins Do-wel thei doon yvel,  
 And the devel serve ;  
 And after hir deeth day  
 Shul dwelle with the same,  
 But God gyve hem grace here .  
 Hemself to amende.

“Do-wel my frend is,  
 To doon as lawe techeth ;  
 To love thi frend and thi foo,  
 Leve me, that is Do-bet ;  
 To gyven and to yemen 5584

Bothe yonge and olde, 5585  
To helen and to helpen,  
Is Do-best of alle.

“And Do-wel is to drede God,  
And Do-bet to suffre,  
And so cometh Do-best of bothe,  
And bryngeth adoun the mody,  
And that is wikked wille  
That many a werk shendeth,  
And dryveth away Do-wel  
Thorough dedliche synnes.” 5595





*Passus Decimus de Visione, et  
Secundus de Do-wel.*

**T**HANNE hadde Wit a wif,  
Was hote dame Studie,  
That lene was of lere,  
And of liche bothe ;

She was wonderly wroth  
That Wit me thus taughte ;  
And al starynge dame Studie  
Sterneliche loked.

“Wel artow wis,” quod she to Wit,  
“Any wisdomes to telle  
To flatereres or to fooles,  
That frenetike ben of wittes.” 5607  
And blamed hym and banned hym,  
And bad hym be stille,  
With swiche wise wordes  
To wissen any sottes.  
And seide, “*Noli mittere*, man,  
Margery perles  
Among hogges, that han  
Hawes at wille ;  
Thei doon but dryvele theron,  
Draf were hem levere  
Than al the precious perree  
That in paradys wexeth. 5619

I seye it by swiche," quod she, 5620  
 "That sheweth by hir werkes,  
 That hem were levere lond  
 And lordshipe on erthe,  
 Or richesse, or rentes,  
 And reste at hir wille,  
 Than alle the sooth sawes  
 That Salomon seide evere.

"Wisdom and wit now  
 Is noght worth a kerse,  
 But if it be carded with coveitise,  
 As clotheres kemben hir wolles. 5631  
 Who so can contreve deceites  
 And conspire wronges,  
 And lede forth a love-day  
 To lette with truthe,  
 He that swiche craftes can  
 To counseil is cleped.  
 Thei lede lordes with lesynges,  
 And bi-lieth Truthe.

"Job the gentile  
 In his gestes witnesseth,  
 That wikked men thei welden 5642  
 The welthe of this worlde;  
 And that thei ben lordes of ech a lond  
 That out of lawe libbeth.  
*Quare impii vivunt, bene est omni-  
 bus qui prævaricantur et inique  
 agunt.*

"The Sauter seith the same  
 By swiche that doon ille :  
*Ecce ipsi peccatores abundantes in  
 sæculo obtinuerunt divitias.*

"Lo ! seith holy lettrure, 5653



Whiche beth thise sherewes? 5654  
 Thilke that God gyveth moost,  
 Leest good thei deleth;  
 And moost un-kynde to the com-  
 That moost catel weldeth. [mune  
*Quæ perfecisti destruxerunt, justus  
 autem, etc.*

“Harlotes for hir harlotrie  
 May have of hir goodes,  
 And japeris and jogelours,  
 And jangleris of gestes.

“Ac he that hath holy writ 5665  
 Ay in his mouthe,  
 And kan telle of Tobbye,  
 And of twelve apostles,  
 Or prechen of the penaunce  
 That Pilat wikkedly wroghte  
 To Jhesu the gentile,  
 That Jewes to-drowe;  
 Litel is he loved  
 That swich a lesson sheweth,  
 Or daunted or drawe forth,  
 I do it on God hymselfe. 5676

“But thoo that feynen hem foolis,  
 And with faityng libbeth,  
 Ayein the lawe of oure Lord,  
 And lyen on hemselfe,  
 Spitten and spuen,  
 And speke foule wordes,  
 Drynken and drevelen,  
 And do men fer to gape,  
 Likne men, and lye on hem,  
 That leneth hem no giftes;  
 Thei konne na-moore mynstralcie

Ne musik men to glade, 5688  
 Than Munde the millere  
 Of *Multa fecit Deus*.  
 Ne were hir vile harlotrye,  
 Have God my trouthe !  
 Sholde nevere kyng ne knyght,  
 Ne chanon of seint Poules,  
 Gyve hem to hir yeres-gyve  
 The gifte of a grote.

“Ac murthe and mynstralcie  
 Amonges men is nouthe  
 Lecherie, losengerye, 5699  
 And losels tales,  
 Glotonye and grete othes,  
 This murthe thei lovyeth.

“Ac if thei carpen of Crist,  
 Thise clerkes and thise lewed  
 At mete in hir murthe,  
 Whan mynstrals beth stille,  
 Thannc telleth thei of the Trinite  
 A tale outhere tweye,  
 And bryngen forth a balled reson,  
 And taken Bernard to witnesse,  
 And putten forth a presumption  
 To preve the sothe.  
 Thus thei dryvele at hir deys  
 The Deitec to knowe,  
 And gnawen God with the gorge,  
 Whanne hir guttes fullen.

“Ac the carefulle may crie  
 And carpen at the yate,  
 Bothe a-fyngred and a-furst,  
 And for chele quake ;  
 Is ther noon to nyne hym neer,

His anoy to amende, 5722  
 But hunten hym as an hound,  
 And hoten hym go thennes.  
 Litel loveth he that Lord  
 That lent hym al that blisse,  
 That thus parteth with the povere  
 A percell whan hym nedeth.  
 Ne were mercy in meene men  
 Moore than in riche,  
 Mendinauntz mete-lees  
 Myghte go to bedde.

God is muche in the gorge 5733  
 Of thise grete maistres,  
 Ac amonges meene men  
 His mercy and hise werkes.  
 And so seith the Sauter,  
 I have seighen it ofte :

*Ecce audivimus eam in Efrata, invenimus eam in campis silvæ.*

“Clerkes and othere kynnes men  
 Carpen of God faste,  
 And have hym muche in the mouth ;  
 Ac meene men in herte. 5744

“Freres and faitours  
 Han founde swiche questions,  
 To plese with proude men,  
 Syn the pestilence tyme ;  
 And prechen at saint Poules  
 For pure envye of clerkes ;  
 That folk is noght fermed in the feith,  
 Ne free of hire goodes,  
 Ne sory for hire synnes ;  
 So is pride woxen,  
 In religion and in al the reme, 5755

Amonges riche and povere,     5756  
 That preieres have no power  
 The pestilence to lette.  
 And yet the wrecches of this world  
 Is noon y-war by oother ;  
 Ne for drede of the deeth  
 With-drawe noght hir pride ;  
 Ne beth plentevouse to the povere,  
 As pure charité wolde ;  
 But in gaynesse and in glotonye  
 For-glutten hir good hemselfe,  
 And breketh noght to the beggere  
 As the Book techeth :

*Frangere esurienti panem tuum, etc.*  
 And the moore he wynneth and welt  
 Welthes and richesse,  
 And lordeth in londes,  
 The lasse good he deleth.

“Tobye telleth yow noght so,  
 Taketh hede, ye riche,  
 How the book Bible  
 Of hym bereth witnesse.

*Si tibi sit copia, abundanter tribue.*  
*Si autem exiguum, illud impertiri*  
*stude libenter.*

“Who so hath muche, spende  
 So seith Tobye ;     [manliche,  
 And who so litel weldeth,  
 Rule hym thereafter.  
 For we have no lettre of oure lif,  
 How longe it shal dure,  
 Swiche lessons lordes sholde  
 Lovye to here,  
 And how he myghte moost meynee

Manliche fynde. 5790

“Nought to fare as a fithelere or  
For to seke festes [a frere,  
Homliche at othere mennes houses,  
And hatien hir owene.

Elenge is the halle  
Ech day in the wike,  
Ther the lord ne the lady  
Liketh noght to sitte.

Now hath ech riche a rule  
To eten by hymselfe  
In a pryvee parlour, 5801

For povere mennes sake,  
Or iu a chambre with a chymenee,  
And leve the chief halle.

That was maad for meles,  
Men to eten inne,

And al to spare to spende  
That spille shal another.

“I have y-herd heighe men,  
Etynge at the table,  
Carpen, as thei clerkes were,  
Of Crist, and of hise myghtes ; 5812  
And leyden fautes upon the fader  
That formede us alle,

And carpen ayein clerkes  
Crabbede wordes,  
Why wolde oure Saveour suffre  
Swich a worm in his blisse,  
That bigiled the womman,  
And the man after,  
Thorugh whiche wiles and wordes  
Thei wente to helle,  
And al hir seed for hir synne 5823

The same deeth suffrede.

5824

“ Here lyeth youre lore,  
Thise lordes gynneth dispute,  
Of that the clerkes us kenneth  
Of Crist by the Gospel :

*Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, etc.*

“ Why sholde we that now ben,  
For the werkes of Adam,  
Roten and to-rende ?  
Reson wolde it nevere.

*Unusquisque portabit onus suum, etc.*

“ Swiche motyves thei mene,  
Thise maistres in hir glorie,  
And maken men in mys-bileve  
That muse muche on hire wordes,  
Ymaginatif herafterwarde  
Shal answeere to hir purpos.

“ Austyn to swiche argueres  
Telleth this teme :

*Non plus sapere quam oportet.*

“ Wilneth nevere to wite

Why that God wolde

5846

Suffre Sathan

His seed to bigile ;

Ac bileveth lelly

In the loore of holy chirche,

And preie hym of pardon

And penaunce in thi lyve,

And for his muche mercy

To amende yow here.

For alle that wilneth to wite

The weyes of God almyghty,

I wolde his eighe were in his ers,

And his fynger after, 5858  
 That evere wilneth to wite  
 Why that God wolde  
 Suffre Sathan  
 His seed to bigile,  
 Or Judas to the Jewes  
 Jhesu bitraye.  
 Al was as thow woldest,  
 Lord, y-worshipped be the !  
 And al worth as thow wolt,  
 What so we dispute.

“ And tho that useth thise hany-  
 To blende mennes wittes, [lons  
 What is Do-wel fro Do-bet,  
 That deef mote he worthe,  
 Siththe he wilneth to wite  
 Whiche thei ben bothe,  
 But if he lyve in the lif  
 That longeth to Do-wel.  
 For I dar ben his bolde borgh,  
 That do-bet wole he nevere,  
 Theigh Do-best drawe on hym  
 Day after oother.” 5880

And whan that Wit was y-war  
 What dame Studie tolde,  
 He bicom so confus,  
 He kouthe noght loke,  
 And as doumb as deeth,  
 And drough hym arere ;  
 And for no carpyng I kouthe after,  
 Ne knelyng to the grounde,  
 I myghte gete no greyn  
 Of his grete wittes.  
 But al laughynge he louted, 5891

And loked upon Studie 5892  
 In signe that I sholde  
 Bi-sechen hire of grace.

And whan I was war of his wille,  
 To his wif gan I loute,  
 And seide, "Mercy, madame,  
 Yourè man shal I worthe  
 As longe as I lyve,  
 Bothe late and rathe,  
 For to werche youre wille  
 The while my lif dureth,  
 With that ye kenne me kyndely  
 To knowe what is Do-wel."

"For thi mekenesse, man," quod  
 "And for thi mylde speche, [she,  
 I shal kenne thee to my cosyn  
 That Clergie is hoten.  
 He hath wedded a wif  
 Withinne thise sixe monthes,  
 Is sib to seven artz,  
 Scripture is hir name.  
 They two, as I hope,  
 After my techyng, 5914  
 Shullen wissen thee to Do-wel,  
 I dar it undertake."

Thanne was I al so fayn,  
 As fowel of fair morwe,  
 And gladder than the gle-man  
 That gold hath to gifte;  
 And asked hire the heighe wey  
 Where that Clergie dwelte,  
 "And tel me som tokene," quod I,  
 "For tyme is that I wende."

"Aske theheighe wey," quod she,



“Hennes to Suffre- 5926  
Both-wele-and-wo,  
If that thow wolt lerne,  
And ryd forth by Richesse,  
Ac rest thow noght therinne ;  
For if thow couplest thee therwith,  
To Clergie comestow nevere.

“And also the likerouse launde  
That Lecherie hatte,  
Leve it on thi left half  
A large myle or moore,  
Til thow come to a court, 5937  
Kepe-wel-thi-tunge-  
Fro-lesynges-and-lither-speche-  
And-likerouse-drynkes.

“Thanne shaltow se Sobretee,  
And Sympletee-of-speche,  
That ech wight be in wille  
His wit thee to shewe ;  
And thus shaltow come to Clergie,  
That kan manye thynges.

“Seye hym this signe,  
I sette hym to scole, 5948  
And that I grete wel his wif,  
For I wroot hire manye bokes,  
And sette hire to Sapience,  
And to the Sauter glose ;  
Logyk I lerned hire,  
And manye othere lawes,  
And alle musons in musik  
I made hire to knowe.

“Plato the poete  
I putte first to boke,  
Aristotle and othere mo 5959

To argue I taughte.

5960

“ Grammer for girles  
I garte first to write,  
And bette hem with a baleys,  
But if thei wolde lerne,

“ Of alle kynne craftes  
I contreveld tooles,  
Of carpentrie, of kerveres,  
And compased masons,  
And lerned hem level and lyne,  
Though I loke dymme.

“ Ac Theologie hath tened me  
Ten score tymes ;  
The moore I muse therinne  
The mystier it seemeth,  
And the depper I devyne  
The derker me it thynketh.  
It is no science, for sothe,  
For to sotile inne ;  
A ful lethi thyng it were,  
If that love nere ;  
Ac for it leteth best bi-love,  
I love it the bettre.  
For there that love is ledere,  
Ther lakked nevere grace.  
Loke thow love lelly,  
If thee liketh Do-wel ;  
For Do-bet and Do-best  
Ben of Loves kynne.

5982

“ In oother science it seith,  
I seigh it in Caton :     [*amicus*,  
*Qui simulat verbis, nec corde est fidus*  
*Tu quoque fac simile, sic ars delu-*  
*ditur arte.*

5993

“ Who so gloseth as gyloursdoon,  
Go me to the same ;  
And so shaltow fals folk  
And feith-lees bigile.  
This is Catons kennyng  
To clerkes that he lereth.

“ Ac Theologie techeth noght so,  
Who so taketh yeme ;  
He kenneth us the contrarie,  
Ayein Catons wordes.

For he biddeth us be as bretheren,  
And bidde for our enemys. 6004

And loven hem that lyen on us,  
And lene hem whan hem nedeth,  
And do good ayein yvel,  
God hymself it hoteth.

*Dum tempus habemus, operemur  
bonum ad omnes, maxime autem  
ad domesticos fidei.*

Poul preched the peple  
That perfitnesse lovede,  
To do good for Goddes love,  
And gyven men that asked, 6015  
And namely to swiche

As suwen oure bileve,  
And alle that lakketh us, or lyeth,  
Oure Lord techeth us to love.  
And noght to greven hem that grev-  
God hymself forbad it, [eth us,  
*Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam.*

“ For-thi loke thow lovey,  
As longe as thow durest ;  
For is no science under sonne  
So sovereyn for the soule. 6026

"Acastronome is an hard thyng,  
 And yvel for to knowe ;  
 Geometrie and geomesie,  
 So gynful of speche,  
 Whoso thynketh werchewith thotwo  
 Thryveth ful late,  
 For sorcerie is the sovereyn book  
 That to tho sciences bilongeth.

"Yet ar ther fibicches in forceres  
 Of fele mennes makynge,  
 Experimentz of alkenamye  
 The peple to deceyve ;                      6038  
 If thou thynke to do-wel,  
 Deel therwith nevere.

"Alle thise sciences I myself  
 Sotileded and ordeynede,  
 And founded hem formest  
 Folk to deceyve.  
 Tel Clergie this tokene,  
 And Scripture after,  
 To counseille thee kyndely  
 To knowe what is Do-wel."

I seide, "Graunt mercy, madame,"  
 And mekely hir grette ;  
 And wente wightly away  
 Withoute moore lettyng,  
 And til I com to Clergie  
 I koude nevere stynte ;  
 And grette the goode man,  
 As Studie me taughte,  
 And afterwarde the wif,  
 And worshiped hem bothe,  
 And tolde hem the tokenes  
 That me taught were.                      6060

Was nevere come upon this ground,  
 Sith God made the worlde,  
 Fairer under-fongen,  
 Ne frendlier at ese,  
 Than myself, soothly,  
 Soone so he wiste  
 Than I was of Wittes hous,  
 And with his wif, dame Studie.

I seide to hem soothly  
 That sent was I thider,  
 Do-wel and Do-bet  
 And Do-best to lerne. [Clergie,  
 "It is a commune lyf," quod  
 "On holy chirche to bileve,  
 With alle the articles of the feith  
 That falleth to be knowe;  
 And that is to bileve lelly,  
 Bothe lered and lewed,  
 On the grete God  
 That gynnyng hadde nevere,  
 And on the soothfast Sone  
 That saved mankynde  
 Fro the dedly deeth  
 And devel's power,  
 Thorugh the help of the Holy Goost,  
 The which goost is of bothe,  
 Thre persones, ac noght  
 In plurel nombre;  
 For al is but oon God,  
 And ech is God hymselfe.

*Deus pater, Deus filius, Deus spiritus  
 sanctus.*

God the fader, God the sone,  
 God holy goost of bothe,

6083

6094

Makere of mankynde, 6095  
 And of beestes bothe.

“Austyn the olde  
 Herof made bokes,  
 And hymself ordeyned  
 To sadde us in bileve.  
 Who was his auctour?  
 Alle the foure euvangelistes,  
 And Crist cleped hymself so,  
 The euvangelistes bereth witnesse.

“Alle the clerkes under Crist  
 Ne koude this assoille ; 6106  
 But thus it bi-longeth to bileve  
 To lewed that willen do-wel.  
 For hadde nevere freke fyn wit  
 The feith to dispute,  
 Ne man hadde no merite,  
 Myghte it ben y-preved.  
*Fides non habet meritum, ubi hu-*  
*mana ratio præbet experimen-*  
*tum.*

“Thanne is Do-bet to suffre  
 For the soules helthe, 6117  
 Al that the book bit  
 Bi holi cherches techyng ;  
 And that is, man, bi thy myght,  
 For mercies sake.  
 Loke thow werche it in werk,  
 That thi word sheweth,  
 Swich as thow semest in sighte  
 Be in assay y-founde.  
*Appare quod es, vel esto quod ap-*  
*pares.*

“And lat no body be 6128

By thi beryng bigiled, 6129  
But be swich in thi soule  
As thow semest withoute.

“Thanne is Do-best to be boold  
To blame the gilty,  
Sythenes thow seest thiself  
As in soule clene ;  
Ac blame thow nevere body,  
And thow be blame worthy.

*Si culpare velis,  
Culpabilis esse cavebis ;  
Dogma tuum sordet,* 6140  
*Cum te tua culpa remordet.*

“God in the Gospel  
Grevously repreveth  
Alle that lakketh any lif,  
And lakkes han hemselve.  
*Qui consideras festucam in oculo  
fratris tui, trabem in oculo tuo,  
etc.*

“Why menestow thi mood for a  
In thi brotheres eighe, [mote  
Sithen a beem in thyn owene 6151  
A-blyndeth thiselve.  
*Ejice primo trabem in oculo tuo,  
etc.*

Which letteth thee to loke  
Lasse outhere more.

“I rede ech a blynd bosarde  
Do boote to hymselfe,  
For abbotes and for priours,  
And for alle manere prelates,  
As persons and parissches preestes  
That preche sholde and teche 6162

Alle maner men to amenden      6163  
Bi hire myghtes.

“This text was told yow,  
To ben y-war, er ye taughte,  
That ye were swiche as ye seye,  
So salve with othere ;  
For Goddesword woldenoght belost,  
For that wercheth evere ;  
If it availed noght the commune,  
It myghte availle yowselve.

“Ac it semeth now soothly  
To the worldes sighte,      6174  
That Goddes word wercheth noght  
On lered ne on lewed,  
But in swich a manere  
As Marc meneth in the gospel :  
*Dum cæcus ducit cæcum, ambo in  
foveam cadunt.*

“Lewed men may likne yow thus,  
That the beem lith in youre eighen ;  
And the festu is fallen  
For youre defaute,  
In alle maner men,      6185  
Thorugh mausede preestes.  
The Bible bereth witnesse  
That the folk of Israel  
Bittre a-boughte the giltes  
Of two badde preestes,  
Offyn and Fynes,  
For hir coveitise,  
*Archa Dei* mys-happed,  
And Ely brak his nekke. [heron.

“For-thi ye corectours claweth  
And corecteth first yowselve      6196



And thanne mowe ye safly seye, 6197  
 As David made in the Sauter,  
*Existimasti inique quod ero tui*  
*similis, arguam te, et statuum*  
*contra faciem tuam.*

“And thanne shul burel clerkes  
 ben abasshed

To blame yow or to greve,  
 And carpen noght as thei carpe now,  
 Ne calle yow doumbe houndes.  
*Canes non valentes latrare.* [word,  
 And drede to wrathe yow in any  
 Youre werkmanshipe to lette,  
 And be prester at youre preiere,  
 Than for a pound of nobles.  
 And al for youre holynesse,  
 Have ye this in herte.

“In scole there is scorn,  
 But if a clerk wol lerne,  
 And gret love and likyng,  
 For ech of hem loveth oother.

“Ac now is Religion a rydere,  
 A romere aboute, 6218  
 A ledere of love-dayes,  
 And a lond-buggere,  
 A prikere on a palfrey  
 Fro manere to manere,  
 An heepe of houndes at his ers  
 As he a lord were.  
 And but if his knave knele  
 That shal his coppe brynge,  
 He loureth on hym, and asketh hym  
 Who taughte hym curteisie.

“Litel hadde lordes to doon, 6229

To gyve lond from hire heires 6230  
 To religiouse, that han no routhe,  
 Though it reyne on hir auters.

“In many places ther thei ben  
 By hemself at ese                    [persons,  
 Of the povere have thei no pité ;  
 And that is hir charité.  
 Ac thei leten hem as lordes  
 Hire londes lyen so brode.

“Ac ther shal come a kyng,  
 And confesse yow religiouses,  
 And bete yow as the Bible telleth 6241  
 For brekyng of youre rule ;  
 And amende monyals,  
 Monkes and chanons,  
 And puten to hir penaunce  
*Ad pristinum statum ire ;*  
 And barons with erles beten hem,  
 Thorugh *Beatus-virres* techyng,  
 That hir barnes claymen  
 And blame yow foule.

*Hi in curribus et hi in equis ipsi  
 obligati sunt, etc.* 6252

“And thanne freres in hir fray-  
 Shul fynden a keye                    [tour  
 Of Costantyns cofres,  
 In which is the catel  
 That Gregories god-children  
 Han yvele despended.

“And thanne shal the abbot of  
 Abyngdone,  
 And al his issue for evere,  
 Have a knok of a kyng,  
 And incurable the wounde. 6263

“That this worth sooth, seke ye  
That ofte over-se the Bible :

*Quomodo cessavit exactor, quievit  
tributum, contrivit Dominus  
baculum impiorum et virgam  
dominantium cædentium plaga  
insanabili.*

“Ac er that kyng come,  
Caym shal awake.  
But Do-wel shal dyngen hym adoun,  
And destruye his myghte.” [quod I,  
“Thanne is Do-wel and Do-bet,”  
“*Dominus* and knyghthode.”

“I nel noght scorne,” quod  
“But if scryveynes lye ; [Scripture,  
Kynghod ne knyghthod,  
By noght I kan a-wayte,  
Helpeth noght to hevene-ward  
Oone heris ende ;  
Ne richesse right noght,  
Ne reautee of lordes.  
Poul preveth it impossible  
Riche men to have hevene. 6286  
Salomon seith also

That silver is worst to lovye :  
*Nihil iniquius quam amare pecu-  
niam.*

And Caton kenneth us to coveiten it  
Naught but as nede techeth,  
*Dilige denarium, sed parce dilige  
formam.*

And patriarkes and prophetes,  
And poetes bothe,  
Writen to wissen us 6297

To wilne no richesse, 6298  
 And preiseden povertewith pacience;  
 The apostles bereth witesse  
 That thei han eritage in hevene,  
 And by trewe righte ;  
 Ther richemen no right may cleyne,  
 But of ruthe and grace."

"*Contra*," quod I, "by Crist !  
 That kan I repreve,  
 And preven it by Peter,  
 And by Poul bothe,  
 That is baptized beth saaf, 6309  
 Be he riche or povere." [Scripture,  
 "That is *in extremis*," quod  
 "Amonges Sarzens and Jewes,  
 They mowen be saved so,  
 And that is oure bileve,  
 That an un-cristene in that caas  
 May cristen an hethen ;  
 And for his lele bileve,  
 Whan he the lif tyneth,  
 Have the heritage of hevene  
 As any man cristene. 6320

"Ac cristene men withoute moore  
 Maye noght come to hevene ;  
 For that Crist for cristene men  
 Deide and confermed the lawe,  
 That who so wolde and wilneth  
 With Crist to arise,  
*Si cum Christo surexistis, etc.*  
 He sholde lovy and leve,  
 And the lawe fulfille.  
 That is, love thi lord God  
 Levest aboven alle ; 6331

And after, alle cristene creatures  
 In commune, ech man oother ;  
 And thus bi-longeth to lovye,  
 That leveth be saved.  
 And but we do thus in dede,  
 At the day of dome  
 It shal bi-sitten us ful soure  
 The silver that we kepen ;  
 And oure bakkes that mothe-eten be,  
 And seen beggeris go naked ;  
 Or delit in wyn and wilde fowel,  
 And wite any in defaute. 6343  
 For every cristene creature  
 Sholde be kynde til oother,  
 And sithen hethen to helpe,  
 In hope of amendement.

“ God hoteth heighe and lowe  
 That no man hurte oother ;  
 And seith, ‘ Slee noght that sem-  
 To myn owene liknesse, [blable is  
 But if I sende thee som tokene ;’  
 And seith ‘ *Non mæchaberis*.  
 Is slee noght, but suffre, 6354  
 And al for the beste ; [torie  
 For I shal punysshem in purga-  
 Or in the put of helle,  
 Ech man for hise mysdedes,  
 But mercy it lette.’ ”

“ **T**HIS is a long lesson,” quod I,  
 “ And litel am I the wiser ;  
 Where Do-wel is or Do-bet,  
 Derkliche ye shewen.  
 Manye tales ye tellen 6364

That Theologie lerneth ; 6365  
 And that I man maad was,  
 And my name y-entred  
 In the legende of lif  
 Longe er I were, [nesse,  
 Or ellis un-writen for som wikked-  
 As Holy Writ witnesseth :  
*Nemo ascendit ad cælum, nisi qui*  
*de cælo descendit.*

“I leve it wel,” quod I, “by oure  
 And on no lettrure bettre. [Lord !  
 For Salomon the sage, 6376  
 That Sapience taughte,  
 God gat hym grace of wit,  
 And alle hise goodes after ;  
 He demed wel and wisely,  
 As Holy Writ telleth.  
 Aristotile and he,  
 Who wissed men bettre ?  
 Maistres that of Goddes mercy  
 Tehen men and prechen,  
 Of hir wordes thei wissen us  
 For wisest as in hir tyme, 6387  
 And al holy chirche  
 Holdeth hem bothe y-dampned.

“And if I sholde werche by hir  
 To wynne me hevene, [werkes  
 That for hir werkes and wit  
 Now wonyeth in pyne,  
 Thanne wroughe I un-wisly,  
 What so evere ye preche.

“Ac of fele witty, in feith,  
 Litel ferly I have,  
 Though hir goost be un-gracious 6398

God for to plese. 6399

For many men on this moolde

Moore setten hir hertes

In good than in God ;

For-thi hem grace failleth

At hir mooste meschief,

Whan thei shal lif lete.

As Salomon dide, and swiche othere

That shewed grete wittes ;

Ac hir werkes, as holy writ seith,

Were evere the contrarie.

For-thi wise witted men, 6410

And wel y-lettrede clerkes,

As thei seyen hemself,

Selde doon therafter.

*Super cathedra Moysi, etc.*

“Ac I wene it worth of manye,

As was in Noes tyme,

Tho he shoop that shipe

Of shides and of bordes ;

Was nevere wrighte saved that

wroghte theron,

Ne oothir werkman ellis, 6421

But briddes, and beestes,

And the blissed Noe,

And his wif with hise sones,

And also hire wyves ;

Of wightes that it wroghte

Was noon of hem y-saved.

“God leve it fare noght so bi folk

That the feith techeth

Of holi chirche, that herberwe is,

And Goddes hous to save,

And shilden us from shame therinne,

As Noes ship dide beestes ;      6433  
 And men that maden it  
 A-mydde the flood a-dreynten.  
 The culorum of this clause  
 Curatours is to mene,      [make  
 That ben carpenters holy kirk to  
 For Cristes owene beestes :  
*Homines et jumenta salvabis, Do-*  
*mine, etc.*

“ On Good Friday I fynde  
 A felon was y-saved,  
 That hadde lyved al his lif      6444  
 With lesynges and with thefte ;  
 And for he bekned to the cros,  
 And to Crist shrof him,  
 He was sonner y-saved  
 Than seint Johan the Baptist ;  
 And or Adam or Ysaye,  
 Or any of the prophetes,  
 That hadde y-leyen with Lucifer  
 Many longe yeres,  
 A robbere was y-raunsoned  
 Rather than thei alle,      [torie,  
 Withouten any penaunce of purga-  
 To perpetuel blisse.

“ Than Marie Maudeleyne  
 What womman dide werse ?  
 Or who worse than David,  
 That Uries deeth conspired ?  
 Or Poul the apostle,  
 That no pité hadde  
 Muche cristene kynde  
 To kille to dethe ?  
 And now ben thise as sovereyns  
 With seintes in hevene,      6467



Tho that wroughte wikkedlokest <sup>6468</sup>  
 In world tho thei were.  
 And tho that wisely wordeden,  
 And writen manye bokes  
 Of wit and of wisdom,  
 With dampned soules wonye.  
 That Salomon seith, I trowe be sooth  
 And certein of us alle :  
*Sunt justi atque sapientes et opera*  
*eorum in manu Dei sunt, etc.*

“Ther are witty and wel libbynge,  
 Ac hire werkes ben y-hudde <sup>6479</sup>  
 In the hondes of almyghty God,  
 And he woot the sothe,  
 Wherefore a man worth allowed there,  
 And hise lele werkes,  
 Or ellis for his yvel wille,  
 And for envye of herte,  
 And be allowed as he lyved so ;  
 For by the luthere men knoweth  
 the goode.

“And wherby wiste men which  
 If alle thyng blak were? [were whit,  
 And who were a good man,  
 But if ther were som sherewe?  
 For-thi lyve we forth with othere  
 I leve fewe ben goode ; [men,  
 For *quant oportet vient en place*,  
*Il n'y ad que pati*.  
 And he that may al amende,  
 Have mercy on us alle !  
 For sothest word that ever Godseide  
 Was tho he seide *Nemo bonus*.

“Clergie tho of Cristes mouth  
 Comended was it litel ; <sup>6501</sup>

For he seide to seint Peter, 6502  
 And to swiche as he lovede,  
*Cum steteritis ante reges et præ-*  
*sides, etc.*

Though ye come bifore kynges  
 And clerkes of the lawe,  
 Beth noght abasshed,  
 For I shal be in youre mouthes,  
 And gyve yow wit and wille,  
 And konnyng to conclude  
 Hem alle that ayeins yow  
 Of Cristendom disputen. 6513

“David maketh mencion,  
 He spak amonges kynges, [hym  
 And myghte no kyng over-comen  
 As by konnyng of speche,  
 But wit and wisdom  
 Wan nevere the maistrie,  
 Whan man was at meschief,  
 Withoute the moore grace.

“The doughtieste doctour  
 And devinour of the Trinitee  
 Was Austyn the olde, 6524  
 And heighest of the foure,  
 Seide thus in a sermon,  
 I seigh it writen ones :

*Ecce ipsi idiotæ irapiunt cælum, ubi*  
*nos sapientes in inferno mer-*  
*gimur.*

“And is to mene to men,  
 Moore ne lesse,  
 Arn none rather y-ravysshed  
 Fro the righte bileve,  
 Than are thise konnyng clerkes  
 That konne manye bokes. 6536

“ Ne none sonner saved, 6537  
 Ne sadder of bileve,  
 Than plowmen and pastours,  
 And othere commune laborers ;  
 Souteres and shepherdes,  
 And othere lewed juttres,  
 Percen with a pater-noster  
 The paleys of hevene,  
 And passen purgatorie penaunce-lees  
 At her hennes partyng  
 Into the blisse of paradis,  
 For hir pure bileve, 6548  
 That imparfitly here knewe,  
 And ek lyvede.

“ Ye men knowe clerkes,  
 That han corsed the tyme [moore  
 That evere thei kouthe or knewe  
 Than *Credo in Deum patrem* ;  
 And principally hir pater-noster  
 Many a persone hath wissed.

“ I se ensamples myself,  
 And so may manye othere,  
 That servauntz that serven lordes  
 Selde fallen in arcrage,  
 And tho that kepen the lordes catel,  
 Clerkes and reves.

“ Right so lewed men,  
 And of litel knowyng,  
 Selden falle thei so foule  
 And so fer in synne,  
 As clerkes of holy chirche  
 That kepen Cristes tresor,  
 The which is mannes soule to save,  
 As God seith in the Gospel :  
*Ite vos in vineam meam.*” 6571



*Passus Undecimus.*

**T**HANNE Scripture scorned  
And a skile tolde, [me,  
And lakked me in Latyn,  
And light by me she sette,  
And seide "*Multi multa sciunt  
Et seipsos nesciunt.*"

Tho wepte I for wo  
And wrathe of hir speche ;  
And in a wynkyng wraþe  
Weex I a-slepe.  
A merveillous metels  
Mette me thanne, 6583  
That I was ravysshed right there,  
And Fortune me fette,  
And into the lond of longynge  
Allone she me broughte, [erthe  
And in a mirour that highte middel-  
She made me to biholde.  
"Sone," she seide to me,  
"Here myghtow se wondres,  
And knowe that thow coveitest,  
And come therto, peraunter."

Thanne hadde Fortune folwyng  
Two faire damyseles ; [hire

*Concupiscentia-carnis*

6596

Men called the elder mayde,  
And Coveitise-of-eighes  
Y-called was that oother.  
Pride-of-parfit-lyvyng  
Pursued hem bothe,  
And bad me for my contenaunce  
Acounten Clergie lighte.

*Concupiscentia-carnis*

Colled me aboute the nekke,  
And seide, "Thow art yong and  
And hast yeres y-nowe [yeepe,  
For to lyve longe,  
And ladies to love ;  
And in this mirour thow myght se  
Myghtes ful manye,  
That leden thee wole to likyng  
Al thi lif tyme."

The secounde seide the same,  
"I shal sewe thi wille ;  
Til thow be a lord and have lond,  
Leten thee I nelle,  
That I ne shal folwe thi felawshipe,  
If Fortune it like."

"He shal fynde me his frend,"

Quod Fortune therafter ;

"The freke that folwede my wille  
Failed nevere blisse." [Elde,

Thanne was ther oon that highte  
That hevy was of chere ; [thee,  
"Man," quod he, "if I mete with  
By Marie of hevene !

Thow shalt fynde Fortune thee faille  
At thi mooste nede,

6629

And *Concupiscentia-carnis* 6630

Clene thee forsake.

Bittrely shaltow banne thanne

Bothe dayes and nyghtes

Coveitise-of-eighe,

That evere thow hir knewe,

And Pride-of-parfit-lyvyng

To muche peril thee brynge."

"Ye, recche thee nevere," quod

Rechelesnesse,

Stood forthe in raggede clothes,

"Folwe forth that Fortune wole, 6640

Thow hast wel fer til Elde;

A man may stoupe tyme y-nogh,

Whan he shal tyne the crowne.

"*Homo proponit* quod a poete,

And Plato he highte,

And *Deus disponit* quod he,

Lat God doon his wille.

If Truthe wol witnesse it be wel do

Fortune to folwe,

*Concupiscentia-carnis*,

Ne Coveitise-of-eighes, 6651

Ne shal noght greve thee gretly,

Ne bigile, but if thow wolt thiselve."

"Ye, fare wel Phippe and Faun-

And forth gan me drawe, [teltee,"

Til *Concupiscentia-carnis*

Acorded alle my werkes.

"Alas ! eighe," quod Elde

And Holynesse bothe, [nesse,

That wit shal torne to wrecched-

For wil to have his likyng."

Coveitise-of-eighes

6662

Conforted me anoon after, 6663  
 And folwed me fourty wynter  
 And a fifte moore,  
 That of Do-wel ne Do-bet  
 Ne deyntee me thoughte.  
 I haddenolykyng, leve me if theelist,  
 Of hem ought to knowe.

Coveitise-of-eighes 6674  
 Com offer in mynde  
 Than Do-wel or Do-bet,  
 Among my dedes alle.

Coveitise-of-eighes 6674  
 Conforted me ofte,  
 And seide, "Have no conscience  
 How thow come to goode.  
 Go confesse thee to som frere,  
 And shewe hym thi synnes ;  
 For whiles Fortune is thi frend  
 Freres wol thee lovyne,  
 And fecche thee to hir fraternitee,  
 And for the biseke  
 To hir priour provincial  
 A pardon for to have, 6685  
 And preien for thee pol by pol,  
 If thow be *pecuniosus*."

*Sed pœna pecuniaria non sufficit pro  
 spiritualibus delictis.*

By wissynge of this wenche I  
 wroughte,  
 Hir wordes were so swete,  
 Til I for-yat youthe,  
 And yarn into elde.

And thanne was Fortune my foo,  
 For al hir faire speche ; 6695





Baptizynge and buryinge 6730  
Bothe beth ful nedefulle ;  
Ac mucche moore meritorie,  
Me thynketh it is to baptize.

For a baptized man may,  
As thise maistres telleth,  
Thorugh contricion come  
To the heighe hevene.

*Sola contritio, etc.*

Ac barn withouten bapteme  
May noght so be saved.

*Nisi quis renatus fuerit.* 6741

Loke ye, lettred men,  
Wheither I lye or do noght."

And Lewté loked on me,  
And I loured after. [Lewtee,

"Wherefore lourestow?" quod  
And loked on me harde.

"If I dorste," quod I, "amonges  
This metels avowe!" [men

"Yis, by Peter and by Poul!"  
quod he,

And took hem bothe to witnesse.

*Non oderis fratres secrete in corde  
tuo, sed publice argue illos."*

"They wole aleggen also," quod I,  
"And by the Gospel preven :

*Nolite judicare quemquam."*

"And wherof serveth lawe?"  
quod Lewtee,

"If no lif undertoke it,

Falsnesse ne faiterie,

For som what the apostle seide,

*Non oderis fratrem.* 6761

And in the Sauter also 6762  
 Seith David the prophete,  
*Existimasti inique quod ero tui*  
*similis, etc.*

“It is *licitum* for lewed men  
 To sigge the sothe,  
 If hem liketh and lest,  
 Ech a lawe it graunteth ;  
 Excepte persons and preestes,  
 And prelates of holy chirche,  
 It falleth noght for that folk  
 No tales to telle, 6773  
 Though the tale be trewe,  
 And it touche synne.

“Thyng that al the world woot,  
 Wherefore sholdestow spare  
 To reden it in retorik  
 To a-rate dedly synne ?  
 Ac be nevere moore the firste  
 Defaute to blame ; [first,  
 Though thow se yvel, seye it noght  
 Be sory it nere amended.  
 No thyng that is pryvé, 6784  
 Publice thow it nevere ;  
 Neither for love preise it noght,  
 Ne lakke it for envye.

*Parum lauda, vitupera parcius.”*

“He seith sooth,” quod Scripture  
 tho,  
 And skipte an heigh, and preched.  
 Ac the matere that she meved,  
 If lewed men it knewe,  
 The lasse, as I leve,  
 Lovyen it thei wolde. 6794

This was hir teme and hir text,  
 I took ful good hede ;  
*Multi* to a mangerie  
 And to the mete were sompned ;  
 And whan the peple was plener  
     comen,

The porter unpynned the yate,  
 And plukked in *Pauci* pryveliche,  
 And leet the remenaunt go rome.

Al for tene of hir text  
 Trembled myn herte ;  
 And in a weer gan I wexe,      6805  
 And with myself to dispute  
 Wheither I were chosen or noght  
     chosen.

On holi chirche I thoughte,  
 That under-fonged me atte font  
 For oon of Goddes chosene.

For Crist cleped us alle,  
 Come if we wolde,  
 Sarzens and scismatikes,  
 And so he dide the Jewes.

*O vos omnes sitientes, venite, etc.*

And bad hem souke for synne  
 Safly at his breste,  
 And drynke boote for bale,  
 Brouke it who so myghte.

“Thanne may alle cristene come,”  
     quod I,

“And cleyme there entree  
 By the blood that he boughte us  
 And thorough bapteme after. [with  
*Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit,*  
     *etc.*      6826

For though a cristen man coveited  
 His cristendom to reneye,  
 Rightfully to reneye  
 No reson it wolde.

“For may no cherl chartre make,  
 Ne his catel selle,  
 Withouten leve of his lord ;  
 No lawe wol it graunte.  
 Ac he may renne in arerage,  
 And rome so fro home,  
 And as a reneyed caytif  
 Recchelesly rennen aboute. 6833  
 And Reson shal rekene with hym,  
 And casten hym in arerage,  
 And putten hym after in a prison  
 In purgatorie to brenne,  
 For hise areragesrewarden hym there  
 To the day of dome ;  
 But if Contricion wol come,  
 And crye, by his lyve,  
 Mercy for hise mysdedes,  
 With mouthe and with herte,”  
 “That is sooth,” seide Scripture ;  
 “May no synne lette  
 Mercy al to amende,  
 And mekenesse hir folwe.  
 For thei beth, as oure bokes telleth,  
 Above Goddes werkes.”  
*Misericordia ejus super omnia opera  
 ejus.*

“Ye, baw for bokes,” quod oon  
 Was broken out of helle,  
 Highte Trojanus, hadde ben a trewe  
 Took witnesse at a pope, [knyght,

How he was ded and dampned 6861  
To dwellen in pyne,  
For an uncristene creature ;  
“ Clerkes wite the sothe,  
That al the clergie under Crist  
Ne myghte me cracche fro helle,  
But oonliche love and leautee,  
And my laweful domes.

“ Gregorie wiste this wel,  
And wilned to my soule  
Savacion for soothnesse  
That he seigh in my werkes ; 6872  
And after that he wepte,  
And wilned me were graunted  
Grace ; withouten any bene biddying  
His boone was under-fongen,  
And I saved, as ye see,  
Withouten syngynge of masses.  
By love and by lernying  
Of my lyvyng, in truthe,  
Broughte me fro bitter peyne  
Ther no biddying myghte.”

Lo ! ye lordes, what leautee dide  
By an emperour of Rome,  
That was an uncristene creature,  
As clerkes fyndeth in bokes.  
Nought thorough preiere of a pope,  
But for his pure truthe,  
Was that Sarsen saved.  
As seint Gregorie bereth witnesse.

Wel oughte ye, lordes, that lawes  
kepe,  
This lesson to have in mynde,  
And on Trojanus truthe to thenke,

And do truthe to the peple. 6894  
 "Lawe, withouten love," quod Tro-  
 "Ley ther a bene, [janus,  
 Or any science under sonne,  
 The sevene artz and alle,  
 But thei ben lerned for oure Lordes  
 Lost is al the tyme ;" [love,  
 For no cause to cacche silver therby,  
 Ne to be called a maister,  
 But al for love of oure Lord,  
 And the bet to love the peple,  
 For seint Johan seide it, 6905  
 And sothe arn hise wordes.

*Qui non diligit, manet in morte.*

Who so loveth noght, leve me,  
 He lyveth in deep deyinge ;  
 And that alle manere men,  
 Enemyes and frendes,  
 Love hir eyther oother,  
 And leve hem, as hemselfe,  
 Who so leveth noght, he loveth  
 God woot the sothe ! [noght,  
 Crist comaundeth ech a creature  
 To conformen hym to lovye,  
 And sovereynly the povere peple,  
 And hir enemyes after.  
 For hem that haten us  
 Is oure merite to lovye,  
 And povere peple to plese,  
 Hir preieres maye us helpe.  
 And oure joye and oure heele  
 Jhesu Crist of hevene  
 In a povere mannes apparaille  
 Pursued us evere ; 6927

And loketh on us in hir liknesse,  
 And that with lovely chere,  
 To knowen us by oure kynde herte  
 And castynge of oure eighen,  
 Wheither we love the lordes here  
 Bifore the Lord of blisse ;  
 And exciteth us by the Euvangelie  
 That whan we maken festes,  
 We sholde noght clepe oure kyn  
 Ne none kynnes riche. [therto,  
*Cum facitis convivia, nolite invitare*  
*amicos.* 6939

“Ac calleth the carefulle therto,  
 The croked and the povere.  
 For youre frendes wol feden yow,  
 And fonde yow to quyte [gifte ;  
 Youre festynge and youre faire  
 Ech frend quyteth so oother.

“Ac for the povere I shal paie,  
 And pure wel quyte hir travaille,  
 That gyveth hem mete or moneie,  
 Or loveth hem for my sake.”  
 For the beste ben som riche, 6950  
 And some beggeres and povere.  
 For alle are we Cristes creatures,  
 And of his cofres riche,  
 And bretheren as of oo blood,  
 As wel beggeres as erles.  
 For on Calvarie of Cristes blood  
 Cristendom gan sprynge,  
 And bloody bretheren we bicomem  
 Of o body y-wonne, [there  
 As *quasi modo geniti*,  
 And gentil-men echone ; 6961

No beggere ne boye amonges us,  
But if it synne made.

*Qui facit peccatum, servus est peccati.*

“In the olde lawe,  
As holy lettre telleth,  
Mennes sones  
Men callen us echone,  
Of Adames issue and Eve,  
Ay til God man deide;  
And after his resurexcion  
*Redemptor* was his name, [y-brought,  
And we hise bretheren thorough hym  
Bothe riche and povere. [ren,

“For-thi love we as leve brethe-  
And ech man laughe of oother;  
And of that ech man may forbere  
Amende there it nedeth;  
And every man helpe oother,  
For hennes shul we alle.

*Alter alterius onera portate.*

“And be we noght un-kynde of  
oure catel,

Ne of oure konnyng neither. 6984

For woot no man how neigh it is

To ben y-nome fro bothe.

For-thi lakke no lif oother,

Though he moore Latyn knowe;

Ne under-nyme noght foule;

For is noon withoute defaute.

For what evere clerkes carpe

Of cristendom or ellis,

Crist to a commune womman seide,

In commune at a feste, 6994



That *fides sua* sholde saven hire,  
And salven hire of synnes.

“Thanne is bileve a lele help,  
Above logyk or lawe.  
Of logyk or of lawe  
In *Legenda Sanctorum*  
Is litel alowaunce maad,  
But if bileve hem helpe.  
For it is over longe er logyk  
Any lesson assoille ;  
And lawe is looth to lovye,  
But if he lacche silver. 7006  
Bothe logyk and lawe,  
That loveth noght to lye,  
I conseilte alle cristene  
Clyve noght theron to soore ;  
For some wordes I fynde writen,  
That were of feithes techyng,  
That saved synful men,  
As seint Johan bereth witnesse.

*Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis,  
remetietur vobis.*

“For-thi lerne we the lawe of  
As oure Lord taughte, [love,  
And as seint Gregorie seide  
For mannes soule helthe :  
*Melius est scrutari scelera nostra,  
quam naturas rerum.*

“Why I meve this matere,  
Is moost for the povere ;  
For in hir liknesse oure Lord  
Ofte hath ben y-knowe.  
Witnesse in the Pask wyke  
Whan he yede to Emaüs ; 7028

Cleophas ne knew hym noght      7029  
 That he Crist were,  
 For his povere apparaille,  
 And pilgrymes wedes,  
 Til he blessedde and brak  
 The breed that thei eten ;  
 So bi hise werkes thei wisten  
 That he was Jhesus,  
 Ac by clothyng thei knewe hym  
 Ne by carpynge of tunge. [noght,  
 And al was in ensample  
 To us synfulle here,      7040  
 That we sholde be lowe  
 And loveliche of speche, [proudly,  
 And apparaille us noght over  
 For pilgrymes are we alle.

“And in the apparaille of a povere  
 And pilgrymes liknesse,      [man,  
 Many tyme God hath ben met  
 Among nedy peple,  
 Ther nevere segge hym seigh  
 In secte of the riche.

“Seint Johan and othere seintes  
 Were seyen in poore clothyng,  
 And as povere pilgrymes  
 Preyed mennes goodes.      [lighte,

“Jhesu Crist on a Jewes doghter  
 Gentil womman though she were,  
 Was a pure povere maide,  
 And to a povere man y-wedded.

“Martha on Marie Maudeleyne  
 An huge pleynt made,  
 And to oure Saveour self  
 Seide thise wordes :      7062

*Domine, non est tibi curæ quod  
soror mea reliquit me solam  
ministrare.*

“And hastily God answerde,  
And eithers wille folwed,  
Bothe Marthaes and Maries,  
As Mathew bereth witnesse ;  
Ac poverte God putte bifore,  
And preised that the bettre.  
*Maria optimam partem elegit, quæ  
non, etc.*

“And alle the wise that evere were,  
By aught I kan aspye,  
Preiseden poverte for best lif,  
If pacience it folwed,  
And bothe bettre and blesseder  
By many fold than richesse.  
For though it be sour to suffre,  
Therafter cometh swete ;  
As on a walnote withoute  
Is a bitter barke,  
And after that bitter bark,  
Be the shelle aweye, 7085  
Is a kernel of confort  
Kynde to restore.

“So is after poverte or penaunce  
Paciently y-take ;  
For it maketh a man to have mynde  
In God, and a gret wille  
To wepe and to wel bidde,  
Wherof wexeth mercy,  
Of which Crist is a kernelle  
To conforte the soule.  
And wel sikerer he slepeth, 7096

The man that is povere, 7097  
 And lasse he dredeth deeth,  
 And in derke to ben y-robbed,  
 Than he that is right riche,  
 Reson bereth wnesse.

*Pauper ego ludo, dum tu dives meditaris.*

“Al though Salomon seide,  
 As folk seeth in the Bible,  
*Divitias nec paupertates, etc.*  
 Wiser than Salomon was  
 Bereth wnesse and taughte 7108  
 That parfit poverté was  
 No possession to have,  
 And lif moost likynge to God,  
 As Luc bereth wnesse :

*Si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende.*

“And is to mene to men  
 That on this moolde lyven,  
 Who so wole be pure parfit  
 Moot possession forsake,  
 Or selle it, as seith the Book,  
 And the silver dele  
 To beggeris that goon and begge  
 And bidden good for Goddes love.  
 For failed nevere man mete  
 That myghtful God serveth,  
 As David seith in the Sauter  
 To swiche that ben in wille  
 To serve God goodliche,  
 Ne greveth hym no penaunce :  
*Nihil impossibile volenti.*  
 Ne lakketh nevere liflode,  
 Lynnen ne wollen. 7130

*Inquirentes autem Dominum non  
minuentur omni bono.*

“If preestes weren parifite,  
Thei wolde ne silver take  
For masses ne for matyns,  
Noght hir mete of usureres,  
Ne neither kirtel ne cote,  
Theigh thei for cold sholde deye,  
And thei hir devoir dide,  
As David seith in the Sauter :  
*Judica me, Deus, et decerne causam*  
*meam.* 7142

“*Spera-in-Deos*peketh of preestes  
That have no spendyng silver,  
That if thei travaille truweliche  
And truste in God almyghty,  
Hem sholde lakke no liflode,  
Neyther lynnen ne wollen.  
And the title that ye take ordres by  
Telleth ye ben avaunced ; [silver  
Thanne nedeth yow noght to take  
For masses that ye syngen.  
For he that took yow youre title,  
Sholde take yow youre wages,  
Or the bisshop that blessed yow,  
If that ye ben worthi. [knyght,  
“For made nevere kyng no  
But he hadde catel to spende  
As bifel for a knyght,  
Or foond hym for his strengthe.  
It is a careful knyght,  
And of a caytif kynges makyng,  
That hath no lond ne lynage riche,  
Ne good loos of hise handes. 7164

"The same I segge, for sothe,  
 By alle swiche preestes  
 That han neither konnyng ne kyn,  
 But a crowne one,  
 And a tittle, a tale of noght,  
 To his liflode at his meschief.  
 He hath moore bileve, as I leve,  
 To lacche through his croune  
 Cure, than for konnyng,  
 Or knowen for clene berynge.  
 I have wonder for why  
 And wherefore the bisshope      7176  
 Maketh swiche preestes,  
 That lewed men bitrayen.

"A chartre is chalangeable  
 Bifore a chief justice ;  
 If fals Latyn be in the lettre,  
 The lawe it impugneth,  
 Or peynted parentrelynarie,  
 Or percelles over-skipped ;  
 The gome that gloseth so chartres  
 For a goky is holden.

"So is it a goky, by God !      7187  
 That in his gospel failleth,  
 Or in masse or in matyns  
 Maketh any defaut.  
*Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est*  
*reus.*

"And also in the Sauter  
 Seith David to over-skipperis,  
*Psallite Deo nostro, psallite, quo-*  
*niam rex terræ Deus Israel,*  
*psallite sapienter.*

"The bisshop shal be blamed

Bifore God, as I leve, [knyghtes  
 That crouneth swiche Goddes  
 That konneth noght *sapienter*  
 Synge, ne psalmes rede,  
 Ne seye a masse of the day.  
 And never neither is blame-lees  
 The bisshope ne the chapeleyn ;  
 For hir either is endited,  
 And that is, *ignorantia*  
*Non excusat episcopos*  
*Nec idiotas* preestes.

“This lokyng on lewed preestes  
 Hath doon me lepe from poverte,  
 The which I preise ther pacience is  
 Moore perfit than richesse.”

A C muche moore in metyng  
 thus  
 With me gan oon dispute ;  
 And slepyng I seigh al this.  
 And sithen cam Kynde,  
 And nempned me by my name,  
 And bad me nymen hede, 7219  
 And thorough the wondres of this  
 Wit for to take. [world  
 And on a mountaigne that myddel-  
 Highte, as me thoughte, [erthe  
 I was fet forth  
 By ensamples to knowe  
 Thorough ech a creature and kynde  
 My creatour to lovye.

I seigh the sonne and the see,  
 And the sond after ;  
 And where that briddes and beestes

By hir makes yeden ;  
Wilde wormes in wodes,  
And wonderful foweles  
With fleckede fetheres  
And of fele colours.

Man and his make  
I myghte bothe biholde ;  
Poverté and plentee ;  
Bothe pees and werre ;  
Blisse and bale bothe  
I seigh al at ones ;  
And how men token mede,  
And mercy refused.

Reson I seigh soothly  
 Sewen alle beestes,  
 In etynge, in drynkyng,  
 And in engendryng of kynde;  
 And after cours of concepcion,  
 Noon took kepe of oother [tyme,  
 As whan thei hadde ryde in rotey  
 Anoon right therafter  
 Males drowen hem to males  
 A-morwenynges by hemselfe, 7253  
 And in evenynges also  
 The males ben fro femelles.  
 Ther ne was cow ne cow-kynde  
 That conceyved hadde,  
 That wolde belwe after boles,  
 Ne boor after sowe;  
 Bothe hors and houndes,  
 And alle othere beestes,  
 Medled nought with hir makes  
 That with fole were.

Briddes I biheld 7264



That in buskes made nestes,      7265  
Hadde nevere wye wit  
To werche the leeste.  
I hadde wonder at whom  
And wher the pye lerned  
To legge the stikkes  
In whiche she leyeth and bredeth.  
Ther nys wrighte, as I wene,  
Sholde werche hir nestes to paye ;  
If any mason made a molde therto,  
Muche wonder it were.

Ac yet me merveilled moore,  
How many othere briddes  
Hidden and hileden  
Hir egges ful derne  
In mareys and moores,  
For men sholde hem noght fynde ;  
And hidden hir egges,  
Whan thei therfro wente,  
For fere of othere foweles,  
And for wilde beestes.

And some troden hir makes,  
And on trees bredden,      7287  
And broughten forth hir briddes so  
Al above the grounde ;  
And some briddes at the bile  
Thorugh brethyng conceyved ;  
And some caukede ; and took kepe  
How pecokkes bredden.  
Muche merveilled me  
What maister hem made,  
And who taughte hem on trees  
To tymbre so heighe,  
Ther neither burn ne beast      7298

May hir briddes rechen. 7299

And sithen I loked upon the see,  
And so forth upon the sterres ;  
Manye selkouthes I seigh,  
Ben noght to seye nouthe.

I seigh floures in the fryth,  
And hir faire colours ;  
And how among the grene gras  
Growed so manye hewes,  
And some soure and some swete,  
Selkouth me thoughte ;  
Of hir kynde and hir colour 7310  
To carpe it were to longe.

Ac that moost meved me  
And my mood chaunged,  
That Reson rewarded  
And ruled alle beestes,  
Save man and his make ;  
Many tyme and ofte  
No reson hem folwede.  
And thanne I rebukede  
Reson, and right  
Til hymselfen I seyde : 7321  
“ I have wonder of thee,” quod I,  
“ That witty art holden, [make,  
Why thow ne sewest man and his  
That no mysfeet hem folwe.”

And Reson a-rated me,  
And seide, “ Recche thee nevere ;  
Why I suffre or noght suffre,  
Thiself hast noght to doone.  
Amende thow it, if thow myght,  
For my tyme is to abide.  
Suffraunce is a soverayn vertue,

And a swift vengeance. 7333  
 Who suffrede moore than God?"  
 "No gome, as I leeve. [quod he ;  
 Hemyghte amende in a minute while  
 Al that mys-standeth ;  
 Ac he suffreth for som mannes goode,  
 And so it is oure bettre,  
 The wise and the witty  
 Wroot thus in the Bible :  
*De re quæ te non molestat, noli  
 certare.*

"For be a man fair or foul, 7344  
 It falleth noght for to lakke  
 The shap ne the shaft  
 That God shoop hymselfe ;  
 For al that he dide was wel y-do,  
 As holy writ witnesseth :  
*Et vidit Deus cuncta quæ fecerat, et  
 erant valde bona.*

"And bad every creature  
 In his kynde encrease ;  
 Al to murthe with man,  
 That moste wo tholie 7355  
 In fondynge of the flesh,  
 And of the fend bothe.  
 For man was maad of swich a matere,  
 He may noght wel a-sterre  
 That ne som tyme hym bitit  
 To folwen his kynde.  
 Caton a-cordeth therwith,  
*Nemo sine crimine vivit."*

Tho caughte I colour anoon,  
 And comsed to ben ashamed,  
 And awaked therwith. 7366

Wo was me thanne, 7367  
 That I in metels ne myghte  
 Moore have y-knowen.  
 And thanne seide I to myself,  
 And chidde that tyme, [quod I,  
 "Now I woot what Do-wel is,  
 By deere God ! as me thynketh."

And as I caste up myne eighen,  
 Oon looked on me and asked  
 Of me, what thyng it were :  
 "Y-wis, sire," I seide,  
 "To se muche and suffre moore,  
 Certes," quod I, "is Do-wel."

"Haddestow suffred," he seide,  
 "Slepyng tho thou were,  
 Thou sholdest have knowen that  
 Clergie kan,

And contrevd moorethorughreson.  
 For Reson wolde have reherced thee  
 Right as Clergie seide.  
 Ac for thyn entre-metyng,  
 Here artow forsake.

*Philosophus esses, si tacuisses* 7388

"Adam, whiles he spak noght,  
 Hadde paradis at wille ;  
 Ac whan he mamelede aboute mete,  
 And entre-metede to knowe  
 The wisdom and the wit of God,  
 He was put fram blisse.

"And right so ferde Reson bithee ;  
 Thou with thi rude speche  
 Lakkedest and losedest thyng  
 That longed the noght to doone.  
 Tho hadde he no likyng  
 For to lere the moore. 7400

“Pryde now and presumpcion 7401  
Peraventure wol thee appele,  
That Clergie thi compaignye  
Kepeth noght to suwe.  
Shal nevere chalangyngenechidyng  
Chaste a man so soone,  
As shal shame, and shenden hym,  
And shape hym to amende.  
For lat a dronken daffe  
In a dyk falle,  
Lat hym ligge, loke noght on hym,  
Til hym liste aryse. 7412  
For though Reson rebuked hym  
It were but pure synne. [thanne,  
Ac whan nede nymeth hym up  
For doute lest he sterve,  
And shame shrapeth hise clothes,  
And hise shynes wassheth,  
Thanne woot the dronken daffe  
Wherfore he is to blame.”

“Ye siggen sooth,” quod I ;  
“Ich have y-seyen it ofte,  
Ther smyt no thyng so smerte,  
Ne smelleth so soure,  
As shame, there he sheweth hym ;  
For every man hym shonyeth.  
Why ye wisse me thus,” quod I,  
“Was for I rebuked Reson.”

“Certes,” quod he, “that is sooth ;”  
And shoop hym for to walken.  
And I aroos up right with that,  
And folwed hym after,  
And preyde hym of his curteisie  
To telle me his name. 7434



*Passus Duodecimus, etc.*

“**I** AM Ymaginatif,” quod he,  
“Ydel was I nevere,  
Though I sitte by myself,  
In siknesse nor in helthe.  
I have folwed thee, in feith!  
Thise fyve and fourty wynter,  
And manye tymes have meved thee  
To thynke on thyn ende,  
And how fele fernyeres are faren,  
And so fewe to come ;  
And of thi wilde wantownesse  
Tho thou yong were, 7446  
To amende it in thi middel age,  
Lest myght the failled  
In thyn olde elde,  
That yvele kan suffre  
Poverté or penaunce,  
Or preyeres to bidde.  
*Si non in prima vigilia, nec in se-*  
*cunda, etc.*

“Amende thee, while thou myght;  
Thou hast ben warned ofte  
With poustees of pestilences,  
With poverté and with angres ; 7458

And with thise bittre baleises 7459  
God beteth his deere children.

*Quem diligo, castigo.*

“And David in the Sauter seith  
Of swiche that loveth Jhesus :

*Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me  
consolati sunt.* [thi staf,

“Al though thow strike me with  
With stikke or with yerde,  
It is but murthe as for me,  
To amende my soule. [kynges,  
And thow medlest thee with ma-  
And myghtest go seye thi Sauter,  
And bidde for hem that gyveth thee  
For ther are bokes y-knowe [breed,  
To telle men what Do-wel is,  
Do-bet and Do-best bothe,  
And prechours to preven what it is  
Of many a peire freres.”

I seigh wel he seide me sooth ;  
And som what me to excuse,  
Seide Caton confortd me his sone,  
That clerk though he were, 7481  
To solacen hym som tyme,  
As I do whan I make :

*Interponetuis interdum gaudia curis.*

“And of holy men I herde,”  
“How thei outhur while [quod I,  
Pleyden the parfiter,  
To ben in manye places,  
Ac if ther were any wight  
That wolde me telle  
What were Do-wel and Do-bet 7492

And Do-best at the laste,                    7493  
 Wolde I nevere do werk,  
 But wende to holi chirche,  
 And ther bidde my bedes,  
 But whan ich ete or slepe."

"Poul in his pistle," quod he,  
 "Preveth what is Do-wel :  
*Fides, spes, caritas, et major horum,*  
*etc.*

Feith, hope, and charité ;  
 And alle ben goode,  
 And saven men sondry tymes ; 7504  
 Ac noon so soone as charité.  
 For he dooth wel withouten doute,  
 That dooth as lewté techeth ;  
 That is, if thow be man maryed,  
 Thi make thow lovyé,  
 And lyve forth as lawe wole,  
 While ye lyven bothe.

"Right so if thow be religious,  
 Ren thow nevere ferther  
 To Rome ne to Rochemador,  
 But as thi rule techeth ;                    7515  
 And hold thee under obedience,  
 That heigh wey is to hevene.

"And if thow be maiden to marye,  
 And myght wel continue,  
 Seke thow nevere seint ferther  
 For no soule helthe.  
 For what made Lucifer  
 To lese the heighe hevene ?  
 Or Salomon his sapience,  
 Or Sampson his strengthe ?  
 Job the Jew his joye                    7526



Ful deere a-boughte ; 7527  
 Aristotle and othere mo,  
 Ypocras and Virgile ;  
 Alisaundre, that al wan,  
 Elengliche ended.

Catel and kynde wit  
 Was combraunce to hem alle.

“ Felice hir fairnesse  
 Fel hire al to sclaunder ;  
 And Rosamounde right so,  
 Reufulliche to bileve,  
 The beauté of hir body 7538  
 In baddenesse she despended.  
 Of manye swiche I may rede,  
 Of men and of wommen,  
 That wise wordes wolde shewe,  
 And werche the contrarie.

*Sunt homines nequam bene de virtute  
 loquentes.*

“ And riche renkes right so  
 Gaderen and sparen,  
 And tho men that thei moost haten  
 Mynistren it at the laste. 7549  
 And for thei suffren and see  
 So manye nedy folkes,  
 Andlovehem noght asoure Lord bit,  
 Thei lesen hir soules.

*Date et dabitur vobis.*

“ And richesse right so,  
 But if the roote be trewe.  
 Ac grace is a gras therof  
 Tho grevaunces to abate.  
 Ac grace ne groweth noght  
 But amonges lowe ; 7560

Pacience and poverté 7561  
 The place highte ther it groweth,  
 And in lele lyvyng men,  
 And in lif holy,  
 And thorough the gifte of the Holy  
 As the Gospel telleth. [Goost,  
*Spiritus ubi vult spirat.*

“Clergie and kynde wit  
 Cometh of sighte and techyng;  
 As the book bereth witnesse  
 To burnes that kan rede.  
*Quod scimus loquimur, quod vidimus  
 testamur.*

“Of *quod scimus* cometh clergie  
 And konnyng of hevene;  
 And of *quod vidimus* cometh kynde  
 Of sighte of diverse peple. [wit,  
 Ac grace is a gifte of God,  
 And of greet love spryngeth;  
 Knew nevere clerk how it cometh  
 Ne kynde wit the weyes. [forth,  
*Nescit aliquis unde venit, aut quo  
 vadit, etc.* 7583

“Ac yet is clergie to comende,  
 And kynde wit bothe;  
 And namely clergie, for Cristes love  
 That of clergie is roote.  
 For Moyses witnesseth that God  
 For to wisse the peple [wroot  
 In the olde lawe, as the lettre telleth,  
 That was the lawe of Jewes,  
 That what womman were in avoutrye  
 Were she riche or poore, [taken,  
 With stones men sholde hir strike,

And stone hire to dethe. 7595

“A womman, as I fynde,  
Was gilty of that dede.  
Ac Crist of his curteisie  
Thorough clergie hir saved ;  
And thorough caractes that Crist  
The Jewes knewe hemselfe [wroot,  
Giltier as a-fore God,  
And gretter in synne,  
Than the womman that there was,  
And wenten away for shame.

“The clergie that there was,  
Conforted the womman.  
Holy kirke knoweth this,  
That Cristes writyng saved hire.  
So clergie is confort  
To creatures that repenten,  
And to mansede men  
Meschief at hire ende.

“For Goddes body myghte noght  
Of breed, withouten clergie ; [ben  
The which body is bothe  
Boote to the rightfulle, 7617  
And deeth and dampnacion  
To hem that deyeth yvel,  
As Cristes caracte confortede,  
And bothe coupable shewed,  
The womman that the Jewes  
broughte,

That Jhesus thoughte to save.  
*Polite judicare, et not judicabimini.*  
Right so Goddes body, bretheren,  
But if it be worthili taken,  
Dampneth us at the day of dome,

As the caractes dide the Jewes.

“For-thi I counseille thee, for  
     Cristes sake,  
 Clergie that thow lovye.  
 For kynde wit is of his kyn,  
 And neighe cosynes bothe  
 To oure Lord, leve me ;  
 For-thi love hem, I rede.  
 For bothe ben as mirours  
 To amenden oure defautes,  
 And lederes for lewed men  
 And for lettred bothe. 7638

“For-thi lakke thow nevere logik,  
 Lawe ne hise custumes ;  
 Ne countreplede clerkes,  
 I counseille thee for evere.  
 For as a man may noght see,  
 That mysseth hise eighen ;  
 Na-moore kan no clerk,      [bokes.  
 But if he caughte it first thorough  
 Al though men made bokes,  
 God was the maister,  
 And seint spirit the samplarie, 7649  
 And seide what men sholde write.

“Right so ledeth lettrure  
 Lewed men to reson ;  
 And as a blynd man in bataille  
 Bereth wepne to fighte,  
 And hath noon hap with his ax  
 His enemy to hitte,  
 Na-moore kan a kynde witted man,  
 But clerkes hym teche,  
 Come for al his kynde wit  
 To cristendom, and be saved. 7660

Which is the cofre of Cristes tresor,  
 And clerkes kepe the keyes  
 To unloken it at hir likyng,  
 And to the lewed peple  
 Gyve mercy for hire mysdedes,  
 If men it wolde aske  
 Buxomliche and benigneliche,  
 And bidden it of Grace.

“*Archa Dei* in the olde lawe  
 Levytes it kepten ;  
 Hadde nevere lewed man leve  
 To leggen hond on that cheste,  
 But he were preest or preestes sone,  
 Patriark or prophete.  
 For clergie is kepere  
 Under Crist of hevene.  
 Was ther nevere no knyght,  
 But clergie hym made.  
 Ac kynde wit cometh  
 Of alle kynnes syghtes,  
 Of briddes and of beestes,  
 Of tastes of truthe and of deceites.

“Lyveris to-forn us 7683  
 Useden to marke  
 For selkouthes that thei seighen,  
 Hir sones for to teche ;  
 And helden it an heigh science  
 Hir wittes to knowe.  
 Ac thorough hir science soothly  
 Was nevere no soule y-saved,  
 Ne broght by hir bokes  
 To blisse ne to joye ;  
 For alle hir kynde knowynges  
 Come but of diverse sightes. 7694

“Patriarkes and prophetes 7695  
 Repreveden hir science,  
 And seiden hir wordes and hir wis-  
 Nas but a folye ; [domes  
 And to the clergie of Crist  
 Counted it but a truffle.  
*Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est  
 apud Deum.*

“For the heighe Holy Goost  
 Hevene shal to-cleve,  
 And love shall lepen out after  
 Into the lowe erthe ; 7706  
 And clennesses shal cacchen it,  
 And clerkes shullen it fynde.  
*Pastores loquebantur ad invicem.*

“He speketh there of riche men  
 Ne of right witty, [right noght,  
 Ne of lordes that were lewed men,  
 But of the hyeste lettred oute.  
*Ibant magi ab oriente.*

“If any frere were founde there,  
 I gyve thee fyve shillynges ;  
 Ne in none burgeises cote 7717  
 Was that barn born ;  
 But in a burgeises place  
 Of Bethlem the beste.  
*Sed non erat ei locus in diversorio, et  
 pauper non habet diversorium.*

“To pastours and to poetes  
 Appered the aungel,  
 And bad hem go to Bethlem  
 Goddes burthe to honoure ;  
 And songe a song of solas,  
*Gloria in excelsis Deo !* 7728

“ Clerkes knewen it wel,      7729  
And comen with hir presentz,  
And diden homage honourably  
To hym that was almyghty.

“ Why I have tolde al this,  
I took ful good hede  
How thow contrariedest Clergie  
With crabbede wordes,  
How that lewde men lightloker  
Than lettrede were saved,  
Than clerkes or kynde witted men  
Of cristene peple ;      7740  
And thow seidest sooth of somme,  
Ac se in what manere.

“ Tak two stronge men,  
And in Themese cast hem,  
And bothe naked as a nedle,  
Her noon sikerer than oother ;  
That oon hath konnyng and kan  
Swymmen and dyven ;  
That oother is lewed of that labour,  
That lerned nevere swymme ;  
Which trowestow of tho two      7751  
That is in moost drede ?  
He that nevere ne dyved,  
Ne noght kan of swymmyng ?  
Or the swymmere that is saaf  
By so hymself like,  
Ther his felawe fleteth forth  
As the flood liketh,  
And is in drede to drenche,  
That nevere dide swymme ? ”

“ That swymme kan noght,” I  
“ It semeth to my wittes.” [seide,

"Right so," quod the renk. 7763  
 "Reson it sheweth,  
 That he that knoweth clergie  
 Kan sonner arise  
 Out of synne, and be saaf,  
 Though he synne ofte,  
 If hym liketh and lest,  
 Than any lewed leelly.  
 For if the clerk be konnynge,  
 He knoweth what is synne, [sion  
 And how contricion withoute confes-  
 Conforteth the soule ; 7774  
 As thow seest in the Sauter,  
 In Salmes oon or tweyne,  
 How contricion is comended,  
 For it cacheth away synne.  
*Beati quorum remissæ sunt iniqui-  
 tates, et quorum tecta sunt, etc.*  
 "And this conforteth ech a clerk,  
 And covereth hym fro wanhope.  
 In which flood the fend  
 Fondeth a man hardest.  
 Ther the lewed lith stille, 7785  
 And loketh after lente, [to shrifte,  
 And hath no contricion er he come  
 And thanne kan he litel telle,  
 But as his lores-man lereth hym  
 Bileveth and troweth ; [preest,  
 And that is after person or parissch  
 The whiche ben peraventure  
 Unkonnynge to lere lewed men,  
 As Luc bereth wnesse :  
*Dum cæcus ducit cæcum, etc.*  
 "Wo was hym marked 7796



That wade moot with the lewed !  
 Wel may the barn blesse that man  
 That hym to book sette,  
 That lyvyng after lettrure  
 Saveth hym lif and soule.

*Dominus pars hereditatis mee,*  
 Is a murye verset,  
 That hath take fro Tybourne  
 Twenty stronge theves ;  
 Ther lewed theves ben lolled up,  
 Loke how thei be saved.

“The thef that hadde grace of God  
 On Good-friday, as thow spekest,  
 Was for he yald hym creaunt to  
 Crist on the cros,  
 And knewliche hym gilty,  
 And grace asked of God,  
 That to graunten it is redy  
 To hem that buxomliche biddeth it,  
 And ben in wille to amenden.  
 Ac though that theef hadde hevene,  
 He hadde noon heigh blisse,  
 As seint Johan and othere seintes  
 That deserved hadde better.

“Right as som man yeve me mete,  
 And a-mydde the floor sette me,  
 And hadde mete moore than y-  
 nough,

Ac noght so muche worshipe  
 As tho that seten at the syde table,  
 Or with the sovereynes of the halle ;  
 But sete as a beggere bord-lees  
 By myself on the grounde.  
 So it fareth by that felon

That a Good-friday was saved. 7829  
 He sit neither with seint Johan,  
 Symond ne Jude,  
 Ne with maydenes ne with martires,  
 Confessours ne wydewes ;  
 But by hymself as a soleyne,  
 And served on erthe.  
 For he that is ones a thef  
 Is evere moore in daunger,  
 And, as lawe liketh,  
 To lyve or to deye.

*De peccato propitiato, noli esse sine metu.*

And for to serven a seint  
 And swich a thef togideres,  
 It were neither reson ne right  
 To rewarde hem bothe y-liche.

“ And right as Trojanus the trewe  
 Dwelte noght depe in helle, [knyght  
 That oure Lordne hadde hym lightly  
 So leve I the thef be in hevene. [out,  
 For he is in the loweste of hevene,  
 If oure bileve be trewe ; 7851  
 And wel loselly he lolleth there,  
 By the lawe of holy chirche.

*Qui reddit unicuique juxta opera sua, etc.*

“ And why that oon theef on the  
 Creaunt hym yald [cros  
 Rather than that oother theef,  
 Though thou woldest appose,  
 Alle the clerkes under Crist  
 Ne kouthe the skile assoille.

*Quare placuit, quia voluit.* 7862

“And so I seye by thee      7863  
 That sekest after the whyes,  
 And a-resonedest Reson  
 A rebukynge as it were ;  
 And of the floures in the fryth,  
 And of hire faire hewes,  
 Wherof thei cacche hir colours  
 So clere and so brighte ;  
 And willest of briddes and of beestes,  
 And of hir bredyng, to knowe,  
 Why some be a-lough and some a-  
 Thi likyng it were ;      [loft,  
 And of the stones and of the sterres  
 Thow studieth, as I leve ;  
 How evere beest outhur brid  
 Hath so breme wittes.

“Clergie ne kynde wit  
 Ne knew nevere the cause ;  
 Ac kynde knoweth the cause hym-  
 And no creature ellis.      [self,  
 He is the pies patron,  
 And putteth it in hir ere  
 There the thorn is thikkest      7885  
 To buylden and brede.  
 And kynde kenned the pecok  
 To cauken in swich a kynde ;  
 And kenned Adam  
 To knowe his pryvé membres,  
 And taughte hym and Eve  
 To helien hem with leves.

“Lewed men many tymes  
 Maistres thei apposen,  
 Why Adam ne hiled noght first  
 His mouth that eet the appul,      7896

Rather than his likame a-logh ;  
 Lewed asken thus clerkes.

“Kynde knoweth whi he dide so,  
 Ac no clerk ellis,  
 Ac of briddes and of beestes  
 Men by olde tyme  
 Ensamples token and termes,  
 As telleth the poetes ;  
 And that the faireste fowel  
 Foulest engendreth,  
 And feblest fowel of flight is  
 That fleeth or swymmeth ;      7908  
 And that the pecok and the pehen  
 Proude riche men bitokneth ;  
 Forthe pecok, and men pursue hym,  
 May noght flee heighe,  
 For the trailynge of his tail  
 Overtaken is he soone,  
 And his flessch is foul flessch,  
 And his feet bothe,  
 And un-lovelich of ledene,  
 And looth for to here.

“Right so the riche,      7919  
 If he his richesse kepe,  
 And deleth it noght til his deeth-day,  
 The tail of alle sorwe  
 Right so as the pennes of the pecok  
 Peyneth hym in his flight.  
 So is possession peyne  
 Of pens and of nobles,  
 To alle hem that it holdeth,  
 Til hir tail be plukked.      [thane

“And though the riche repente  
 And bi-rewe the tyme      7930

That evere he gadered so grete, 7931  
And gaf therof so litel ;  
Though he crye to Crist thanne  
With kene wil, I leve,  
His ledene be in oure Lordes ere  
Like a pies chiteryng.  
And whan his caroyne shal come  
In cave to be buryed,  
I leve it flawme ful foule  
The fold al aboute,  
And alle the othere ther it lith  
Envenymeth thorough his attre.

“By the po feet is understande,  
As I have lerned in Avynet,  
Executours false frendes  
That fulfille noght his wille  
That was writen and thei witnesse  
To werche right as it wolde.  
Thus the poete preveth that the pecok  
For hise fetheres is reverenced,  
Right so is the riche  
By reson of hise goodes.

“The larke, that is a lasse fowel,  
Is moore lovelich of ledene,  
And wel a wey of wynges  
Swifter than the pecok,  
And of flessh by fele fold  
Fatter and swetter ;  
To lowe libbynge men  
The larke is resembled.

“Aristotle the grete clerk  
Swiche tales he telleth.  
Thus he likneth in his logik  
The leeste fowel oute,

And wheither he be saaf or noght  
 The sothe woot no clergie, [saaf  
 Ne of Sortes ne of Salomon  
 No scripture kan telle.

Ac God is so good, I hope,  
 That siththe he gaf hem wittes  
 To wissen us weyes therwith  
 That wissen us to be saved,  
 And the bettre for hir bokes  
 To bidden we ben holden,  
 That God for his grace

Gyve hir soules reste. 7976  
 For lettred men were lewed men yet,  
 Ne were loore of hir bokes."

"Alle thise clerkes," quod I tho,  
 "That in Crist leven,  
 Seyen in hir sermons  
 That neither Sarsens ne Jewes  
 Ne no creature of Cristes liknesse  
 Withouten cristendom worth saved."

"*Contra*," quod Ymaginatif thoo,  
 And comsed for to loure ;  
 And seide "*Salvabitur* 7987  
*Vix justus in die judicii.*  
*Ergo salvabitur*," quod he,  
 And seide na-moore Latyn.

"Trojanus was a trewe knyght,  
 And took nevere Cristendom,  
 And he is saaf, so seith the book,  
 And his soule in hevene.  
 For ther is fullynge of font,  
 And fullynge in blood shedyng,  
 And thorough fir is fullyng,  
 And that is ferme bileve. 7998

*Advenit ignis divinus non comburens, sed illuminans, etc.*

“Ac Truthe that trespased  
nevere,

Ne traversed ayeins his lawe,  
But lyveth as his lawe techeth,  
And leveth ther be no bettre ;  
And if ther were, he wolde amende,  
And in swich wille deieth,  
Ne wolde nevere trewe god,  
But truthe were allowed, [worth,  
And wheither it be worth or noght  
The bileve is gret of truthe, 8010  
And an hope hangynge therinne  
To have a mede for his truthe.

For *Deus dicitur quasi dans vitam  
æternam suis, hoc est fidelibus.  
Et alibi: Si ambulavero in  
medio umbræ mortis.*

“Theglose graunteth upon that vers  
A greet mede to Truthe,  
And witand wisdom,” quod that wye,  
“Was som tyme tresor  
To kepe with a commune, 8021  
No catel was holde bettre,  
And mucche murthe and manhod ;”  
And right with that he vanysshed.



*Passus Decimus Tertius, etc.*

**A**ND I awaked therwith 8025  
Wit-lees ner-hande,  
And as a freke that fre were  
Forth gan I walke

In manere of a mendinaunt  
Many a yer after,  
And of this metyng many tyme  
Muche thought I hadde.

First how Fortune me failed  
At my mooste nede ;  
And how that Elde manaced me,  
Myghte we evere mete ; 8036  
And how that freres folwede  
Folk that was riche,  
And folk that was povere  
At litel pris thei sette ;  
And no corps in hir kirk-yerde  
Nor in his kirk was buryed,  
But quik he biquethe aught  
To quyte with hir dettes ;  
And how this Coveitise over-com  
Clerkes and preestes ;  
And how that lewed men ben lad,  
But oure Lord hem helpe, 8048



Thorough un-konnynge curatours,  
To incurable peynes.

And how that Ymaginatif  
In dremels me tolde  
Of Kynde and of his konnynge,  
And how curteis he is to bestes,  
And how lovyng he is to briddes  
On londe and on watre.  
Leneth he no lif  
Lasse ne moore.

The creatures that crepen  
Of kynde ben engendred. 8060  
And sithen how Ymaginatif seide,  
*Vix salvabitur ;*

And whan he hadde seid so,  
How sodeynliche he passed.

I lay down longe in this thoght,  
And at the laste I slepte.  
And as Crist wolde, ther com Con-  
To conforte me that tyme, [science  
And bad me come to his court,  
With Clergie sholde I dyne ;  
And for Conscience of Clergie spak,  
I com wel the rather.

And there I seigh a maister,  
What man he was I nyste,  
That lowe louted  
And loveliche to Scripture.

Conscience knew hym wel,  
And welcomed hym faire.  
Thei wesshen and wipeden,  
And wenten to the dyner.  
And Pacience in the paleis stood  
In pilgrymes clothes, 8082

And preyde mete *par charité*     8083  
 For a povere heremyte.

Conscience called hym in,  
 And curteisliche seide,  
 "Welcome! wye; go and wasshe;  
 Thow shalt sitte soone."

This maister was maad sitte,  
 As for the mooste worthi.  
 And thanne Clergie and Conscience  
 And Pacience cam after.

Pacience and I  
 Were put to be macches,     8094  
 And seten bi oureselve  
 At the side borde.

Conscience called after mete;  
 And thanne cam Scripture,  
 And served hem thus soone  
 Of sondry metes manye,  
 Of Austyn, of Ambrose,  
 And of the foure Euvangelistes,  
*Edentis et bibentis quæ apud eos*  
*sunt.*

Ac this maister nor his man     8105  
 No maner flesshe eten;  
 Ac thei eten mete of moore cost,  
 Mortrews and potages  
 Of that men mys-wonne  
 Thei made hem wel at ese.  
 Ac hir sauce was over sour,  
 And unsavourly grounde  
 In a mortar *post mortem*  
 Of many a bitter peyne,  
 But if thei synge for tho soules,  
 And wepe salte teris.     8116

*Vos qui peccata hominum comeditis,  
nisi pro eis lacrimas et ora-  
tiones effunderitis, ea quæ in  
deliciis comeditis, in tormentis  
evometis.*

Conscience ful curteisly tho  
Comaunded Scripture  
Bifore Pacience breed to brynge  
And me that was his macche.  
He sette a sour loof to-forn us,  
And seide, "*agite pœnitentiam.*"  
"As longe," quod I, "as I lyve,  
And lycame may dure."  
"Here is propre service," quod  
Pacience,

"Ther fareth no prince bettre,"  
And thanne he broughte us forth  
a mees of oother mete,  
Of *Miserere mei, Deus*, [*quorum*,  
And he broughte us of *Beati*  
Of *Beatus-virres* makyng.

*Et quorum tecta sunt peccata* in a  
disshe, [*tibi.*  
Of derne shrifte *Dixi et confitebor*  
"Bryng Pacience som pitaunce,"  
Pryveliche quod Conscience.

And thanne hadde Pacience a  
pitaunce.

*Pro hac orabit ad te omnis sanctus  
in tempore oportuno.*

And Conscience conforted us,  
And carped us murye tales.

*Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus  
non despiciet.*

Pacience was proud 8147  
 Of that propre service,  
 And made hym murthe with his  
 Ac I mornede evere, [mete ;  
 For this doctour on the heighe dees  
 Drank wyn so faste.

*Væ vobis qui potentes estis ad bibendum vinum !*

He eet manye sondry metes,  
 Mortrews and puddynges,  
 Wombe-cloutes and wilde brawen,  
 And egges y-fryed with grece.

Thanne seide I to myself so  
 Pacience it herde,  
 "It is noght foure dayes that this  
 Bifore the deen of Poules [freke  
 Preched of penaunces  
 That Poul the apostle suffrede,  
*In fame et frigore*  
 And flappes of scourges."

*Ter cæsus sum, et a Judeis quinquies  
 quadragenas, etc.*

Ac o word thei over-huppen  
 At ech a tyme that thei preche,  
 That Poul in his Pistle  
 To al the peple tolde :

*Periculum est in falsis fratribus.*

Holi writ bit men be war,  
 I wol noght write it here  
 In Englisshe, on aventure  
 It sholde be reherced to ofte,  
 And greve therwith goode men,  
 Ac gramariens shul redde.

*Unusquisque a fratre se custodiat,*

*quia, ut dicitur, periculum est  
in falsis fratribus.*

Ac I wiste nevere freke that as a  
frere yede

Bifore men on Englisshe  
Taken it for his teme,  
And telle it withouten glosyng.  
They prechen that penaunce is  
Profitable to the soule,  
And what meschief and *male ese*  
Crist for man tholede.

“Ac this Goddes gloton,” quod I,  
“With hise grete chekes,  
Hath no pité on us povere,  
He perfourneth yvele ;  
That he precheth he preveth noght,”  
To Pacience I tolde,  
And wisshed ful witterly,  
With wille ful egre,  
That disshes and doubler  
Bifore this ilke doctour  
Were molten leed in his mawe,  
And Mahoun amyddes. 8202  
“I shal jangle to this jurdan  
With his juste wombe,  
To telle me what penaunce is,  
Of which he preched rather.”

Pacience perceyved what I  
thoughte,  
And wynt on me to be stille,  
And seide, “Thow shalt see thus  
soone,  
Whan he may na-moore,  
He shal have a penaunce in his  
paunche, 8211

And puffed at ech a worde ;     8212  
 And thanne shullen his guttes go-  
 And he shal galpen after. [thele,  
 For now he hath dronken so depe,  
 He wole devyne soone,  
 And preven it by hir Pocalips  
 And passion of seint Avereys,  
 That neither bacon ne braun,  
 Blancmanger ne mortrews,  
 Is neither fissh nor flesshe,  
 But fode for a penaunt [Trinité,  
 And thanne shal he testifie of the  
 And take his felawe to witnesse,  
 What he fond in a frayel,  
 After a freres lyvyng ;  
 And but he first lyve be lesyng,  
 Leve me neverc after.  
 And thanne is tyme to take,  
 And to appose this doctour  
 Of Do-wel and Do-bet,  
 And if Do-wel be any penaunce."

And I sat stille, as Pacience seide,  
 And thus soone this doctour,     8234  
 As rody as a rose,  
 Rubbede hise chekes,  
 Coughed and carped ;  
 And Conscience hym herde,  
 And tolde hym of a Trinité,  
 And toward us he loked. [quod I,  
 "What is Do-wel, sire doctour?"  
 "Is it any penaunce?"  
 "Do-wel," quod this doctour,  
 And took the cuppe and drank,  
 "Is do noon yvel to thyn even-  
 cristen     8245

Nought by thi power." [quod I,

"By this day! sire doctour,"

"Thanne be ye noght in Do-wel ;

For ye han harmed us two,

In that ye eten the puddyng,

Mortrews and oother mete,

And we no morsel hadde.

And if ye fare so in youre fermerye,

Ferly me thynketh,

But cheeste bether charité sholde be.

And yonge children dorste pleyne,

I wolde permute my penaunce with

youre,

8257

For I am in point to Do-wel."

Thanne Conscience curteisly

A contenaunce made,

And preynte upon Pacience

To preie me to be stille ;

And seide hymself, "Sire doctour,

And it be youre wille,

What is Do-wel and Do-bet,

Ye dyvynours knoweth."

"Do-wel," quod this doctour,

"Do as clerkes techeth ;

And Do-bet is he that techeth,

And travailleth to teche othere ;

And Do-best doth hymself so,

As he seith and precheth."

*Qui facit et docuerit, magnus voca-*

*bitur in regno cœlorum.*

"Now thow, Clergie," quod Con-

"Carpest what is Do-wel. [science,

I have sevene sones," he seide,

"Serven in a castel,

8278

Ther the lord of lif wonyeth, 8279  
 To leren what is Do-wel ;  
 Til I se tho sevene  
 And myself acorde,  
 I am un-hardy," quod he,  
 "To any wight to preuen it.  
 For oon Piers the Plowman  
 Hath impugned us alle,  
 And set alle sciences at a sope,  
 Save love one ;  
 And no text ne taketh  
 To mayntene his cause, 8290  
 But *Dilige Deum*,  
 And *Domine quis habitabit*.  
 And seith that Do-wel and Do-bet  
 Arn two infinités,  
 Whiche infinités, with a feith !  
 Fynden out Do-best,  
 Which shal save mannes soule ;  
 Thus seith Piers the Plowman."  
 "I kan noght heron," quod Con-  
 "Ac I knowe wel Piers ; [science,  
 Hewolnoght ayein holy writspeken,  
 I dar wel undertake.  
 Thanne passe we over til Piers come,  
 And preve this in dede.  
 Pacience hath be in many place,  
 And peraunter mouthed  
 That no clerk ne kan,  
 As Crist bereth witnesse :  
*Patientes vincunt, etc.*" [tho,  
 "Ac youre preiere," quod Pacience  
 "So no man displese hym.  
*Disce,*" quod he, "*Doce,* 8312



*Dilige inimicos.*

8313

*Disce*, and Do-wel ;*Doce*, and Do-bet ;*Dilige*, and Do-best ;

Thus taughte me ones

A lemman that I lovede,

Love was hir name : [quod she,

“ With wordes and with werkes,”

“ And wil of thyn herte,

Thow love leelly thi soule

Al thi lif tyme,

And so thow lere the to lovye,

For oure Lordes love of hevene,

Thyn enemy in alle wise

Evene forth with thiselve.

Cast coles on his heed

Of alle kynde speche,

Bothe with werkes and with wordes

Fonde his love to wynne ;

And leye on him thus with love,

Til he laughe on the.

And but he bowe for this betyng,

Blynd mote he worthe. 8335

“ Ac for to fare thus with thi frend,

Folie it were.

For he that loveth thee leelly,

Litel of thyne coveiteth.

Kynde love coveiteth noght

No catel but speche.

With halfe a laumpe lyne,

In Latyn, *Ex vi transitionis*,

I bere therinne aboute

Faste y-bounde Do-wel,

In a signe of the Saterdag 8346

That sette first the kalender, 8347  
 And al the wit of the Wodnesday  
 Of the nexte wike after,  
 The myddel of the moone,  
 As the nyght of bothe,  
 And herwith am I welcome  
 Ther I have it with me,

“Undo it, lat this doctour deme  
 If Do-wel be therinne.

For, by hym that me made !

Myghte nevere poverte

Misese ne meschief, 8358

Ne no man with his tonge,

Coold ne care,

Ne compaignye of theves,

Ne neither hete ne hayl,

Ne noon helle pouke,

Ne fuyr ne flood,

Ne feere of thyn enemy,

Tene thee any tyme,

And thow take it with the.

*Caritas nihil timet, etc.*”

“It is but a dido,” quod this doc-

“A disours tale ; [tour,

Al the wit of this world,

And wight mennes strengthe,

Kan noght conformen a pees

Bitwene and hise enemys,

Ne bitwene two cristene kynges

Kan no wight pees make

Profitable to either peple ;”

And putte the table fro hym,

And took Clergie and Conscience

To conseil, as it were, 8380

That Pacience thow most passe,  
For pilgrymes konne wel lye."

Ac Conscience carped loude,  
And curteisliche seide,  
"Frendes, fareth wel ;"

And faire spak to Clergie,  
"For I wol go with this gome,  
If God wol yeve me grace,  
And be pilgrym with Pacience,  
Til I have preved moore."

"What !" quod Clergie to Con-  
"Ar ye coveitous nouthe [science,  
After yeres-geves, or giftes,  
Or yernen to rede redels ?  
I shal brynge yow a Bible,  
A book of the olde lawe,  
And lere yow, if yow like,  
The leeste point to knowe,  
That Pacience the pilgrym  
Parfitly knew nevere." [science

"Nay, by Crist !" quod Con-  
To Clergie, "God thee for-yelde ;  
For al that Pacience me profreth  
Proud am I litel.

Ac the wil of the wye,  
And the wil of folk here,  
Hath meved my mood  
To moorne for my synnes.  
The goode wil of a wight  
Was nevere bought to the fulle.  
For ther nys no tresour, for sothe,  
To a trewe wille.

"Hadde noght Maudeleyne  
For a box of salve, [moore

Than Zacheus for he seide 8415  
*Dimidium bonorum meorum do*  
*pauperibus?*

And the poore widewe  
 For a peire of mytes,  
 Than alle tho that offrede  
 Into *gazophilacium?* ”

Thus curteisliche Conscience  
 Congeeyed first the frere,  
 And sithen softeliche he seide  
 In Clergies ere,  
 “Me were levere, by oure Lord!  
 And I lyve sholde,  
 Have pacience perfitliche,  
 Than half thi pak of bokes.”

Clergie of Conscience  
 No congie wolde take,  
 But seide ful sobreliche,  
 “Thow shalt se the tyme  
 Whan thow art wery of-walked,  
 Wille me to counseille.”

“That is sooth,” quod Con-  
 “So me God helpe! [science,  
 If Pacience be oure partyng felawe,  
 And pryvé with us bothe,  
 Ther nys wo in this world  
 That we ne sholde amende,  
 And conformen kynges to pees,  
 And alle kynnes londes;  
 Sarsens and Surré,  
 And so forth alle the Jewes,  
 Turne into the trewe feith,  
 And intil oon bileve.”

“That is sooth,” quod Clergie,

“I se what thow menest ;                    8449  
 I shal dwelle as I do,  
 My devoir to shewe,  
 And confermen fauntekyns,  
 And oother folk y-lered,  
 Til Pacience have preved thee,  
 And parfit thee maked.”

Conscience tho with Pacience  
 Pilgrymes as it were.                    [passed,  
 Thanne hadde Pacience, as pil-  
 In his poke vitailles, [grymes han,  
 Sobretee and symple speche,                    8460  
 And soothfast bileve,  
 To conforte hym and Conscience,  
 If thei come in place  
 Thereun-kyndenesseandcoveitiseis,  
 Hungry contrees bothe.

And as the wente by the weye,  
 Of Do-wel thei carped ;  
 Thei mette with a mynstral,  
 As me tho thoughte.  
 Pacience apposed hym first.  
 And preyde he sholde hem telle  
 To Conscience what craft he kouthe,  
 And to what contree he wolde.

“I am a mynstrall,” quod that  
 “My name is *Activa-vita* ;                    [man,  
 Al ydelnesse ich hatie,  
 For of actif is my name ;  
 A wafrer, wol ye wite,  
 And serve manye lordes,  
 And fewe robes I fonge,  
 Or furrede gownes.  
 Couthe I lye to do men laughe,

Thanne lacchen I sholde 8483  
 Outher mantel or moneie  
 Amonges lordes or mynstrals.  
 Ac for I kan neither taboure ne  
 Ne telle no gestes, [trompe,  
 Farten ne fithelen  
 At festes, ne harpen,  
 Jape ne jogele,  
 Ne gentilliche pipe,  
 Ne neither saille ne saute,  
 Ne synge with the gyterne,  
 I have no goode giftes 8494  
 Of thise grete lordes.  
 For no breed that I brynge forth,  
 Save a benyson on the Sondag  
 Whan the preest preieth the peple  
 Hir pater-noster to bidde  
 For Piers the Plowman,  
 And that hym profit waiten ;  
 And that am I actif,  
 That ydelnesse hatie ;  
 For alle trewe travaillours  
 And tiliers of the erthe, 8505  
 Fro Mighelmesse to Mighelmesse  
 I fynde hem with my wafres.  
     “ Beggeris and bidderis  
 Of my breed craven,  
 Faitours and freres,  
 And folk with brode crounes.  
 I fynde payn for the pope,  
 And provendre for his palfrey ;  
 And I hadde nevere of hym,  
 Have God my trouthe !  
 Neither provendre ne personage

Yet of popes gifte, 8517  
 Save a pardon with a peis of leed  
 And two polles amyddes.  
 Hadde ich a clerc that couthe write,  
 I wolde caste hym a bille,  
 That he sente me under his seel  
 A salve for the pestilence,  
 And that his blessynge and hise  
 Bocches myghte destruye. [bulles  
*In nomine meo dæmonia ejicient, et*  
*super ægros manus imponent, et*  
*bene habebunt.* 8528

“And thanne wolde I be prest to  
 Paast for to make, [the peple  
 And buxom and busy  
 Aboute breed and drynke  
 For hym and for alle hise,  
 Founde I that his pardon  
 Mighte lechen a man,  
 As I bileve it sholde.  
 For sith he hath the power  
 That Peter hymself hadde,  
 He hath the pot with the salve,  
 Soothly as me thynketh.

*Argentum et aurum non est mihi ;*  
*quod autem habeo tibi do : in*  
*nomine Domini surge et am-*  
*bula.*

“Ac if myght of myracle hym faille,  
 It is for men ben noght worthi  
 To have the grace of God,  
 And no gilt of pope.  
 Formayno blessynge doon us boote,  
 But if we wile amende, 8550

Ne mannes masse make pees     8551  
 Among cristene peple,  
 Til pride be pureliche for-do,  
 And thorough payn defaute.  
 For er I have breed of mele,  
 Oft moot I swete ;     [y-nough,  
 And er the commune have corn  
 Many a cold morwenyng.  
 So er my wafres be y-wroght,  
 Muche wo I tholye.

“ At Londone, I leve,  
 Liketh wel my wafres ;     8562  
 And louren whan thei lakken hem.  
 It is noght long y-passed,  
 There was a careful commune,  
 Whan no cart com to towne  
 With breed fro Stratforde ;  
 Tho gonnen beggeris wepe,  
 And werkmen were agast a lite ;  
 This wole be thought longe.  
 In the date of oure Drichte,  
 In a drye Aprille,  
 A thousand and thre hundred     8573  
 Twies twenty and ten,  
 My wafres there were gesene  
 Whan Chichestre was maire.”

I took good kepe, by Crist !  
 And Conscience bothe,  
 Of Haukyn the actif man,  
 And how he was y-clothed.  
 He hadde a cote of Cristendom,  
 As holy kirke bileveth ;  
 Ac it was moled in many places  
 With manye sondry plottes ;     8584



Of pride here a plot, 8585  
 And there a plot of unbuxomespeche,  
 Of scornynge and of scoffyng,  
 And of unskilful berynge,  
 As in apparail and in porte  
 Proud amonges the peple,  
 Oother wise than he hym hath  
 With herte or sighte shewynge,  
 Hym willyng that alle men wende  
 He were that he is noght.  
 For-why he bosteth and braggeth  
 With manye bolde othes, 8596  
 And inobedient to ben undernome  
 Of any lif lyvyng;  
 And noon so singuler by hymself,  
 Ne so pomp holy,  
 Y-habited as an heremyte,  
 An ordre by hymselfe,  
 Religion saunz rule  
 Or resonable obedience,  
 Lakkyng lettrede men  
 And lewed men bothe  
 In likynge of lele lif, 8607  
 And a liere in soule,  
 With inwit and with outwit  
 Ymagynen and studie,  
 As best for his body be  
 To have a badde name,  
 And entremetten hym over al  
 Ther he hath noght to doone,  
 Willynge that men wende  
 His wit were the beste. [gomes,  
 And if he gyveth ought to povere  
 Telle what he deleth, 8618

Povere of possession in purs 8619  
 And in cofre bothe.  
 And as a loun on to loke,  
 And lordlich of speche,  
 Boldest of beggeris,  
 A bostere that noght hath,  
 In towne and in tavernes  
 Tales to telle, [seigh,  
 And segge thyng that he nevere  
 And for sothe sweren it,  
 Of dedes that he nevere dide  
 Demen and bosten 8630  
 And of werkes that he wel dide  
 Witnesse, and siggen—  
 “Lo! if ye leve me noght,  
 Or that I lye wenen,  
 Asketh at hym or at hym,  
 And he yow kan telle  
 What I suffrede and seigh  
 And som tymes hadde,  
 And what I kouthe and knew,  
 And what kyn I com of.”  
 Al he wolde that men wiste 8641  
 Of werkes and of wordes  
 Which myghte plese the peple,  
 And preisen hymselfe.  
*Si hominibus placerem, Christi  
 servus non essem. Et alibi:  
 Nemo potest duobus dominis  
 servire.*  
 “By Crist!” quod Conscience tho,  
 “Thi beste cote, Haukyn,  
 Hath manye moles and spottes,  
 It moste ben y-wasshe.” 8652

“Ye, who so toke hede,” quod  
 “Bihynde and bifore, [Haukyn,  
 What on bak and what on body half,  
 And by the two sydes,  
 Men sholde fynde manye frounces,  
 And manye foule plottes.”

And he torned hym as tyd,  
 And thanne took I hede,  
 It was fouler bi fele fold  
 Than it first semed.  
 It was bi-dropped with wrathe  
 And wikkede wille, 8664  
 With envye and yvel speche,  
 Entisyng to fighte,  
 Liynge and laughynge,  
 And leve tonge to chide,  
 Al that he wiste wikked  
 By any wight tellen it,  
 And blame men bihynde hir bak,  
 And bidden hem meschaunce,  
 And that he wiste by Wille  
 Tellen it Watte,  
 And that Watte wiste 8675  
 Wille wiste it after,  
 And make of frendes foes  
 Thorugh a fals tonge,  
 Or with myght or with mouth,  
 Or thorough mennes strengthe  
 Avenge me fele tymes,  
 Other frete myselve  
 Withinne as a shepsteres shere,  
 Y-sherewed man and cursed.

*Cujus maledictione os plenum est  
 et amaritudine, sub lingua ejus*

*labor et dolor. Et alibi : Filii  
hominum, dentes eorum arma  
et sagittæ, et lingua eorum  
gladius acutus.*

“Ther is no lif that me loveth  
Lastynge any while ;  
For tales that I telle,  
No man trusteth to me.  
And whan I may noght have the  
Swich malencolie I take, [maistrie,  
That I cacche the crampe,  
And the cardiacle som tyme, 8698  
Or an ague in swich an angre,  
And som tyme a fevere  
That taketh me al a twelve monthe,  
Til that I despise  
Lechecraft of oure Lord,  
And leve on a wicche,  
And seye that no clerik ne kan,  
Ne Crist, as I leve,  
To the soutere of Southwerk,  
Or of Shordyche dame Emme ;  
And seye that no Goddes word  
Gaf me nevere boote,  
But thorough a charme hadde I  
And my chief heele.” [chance  
I waitede wisloker,  
And thanne was it soilled  
With likynge of lecherie,  
As by lokynge of his eighe.  
For ech a maide that he mette  
He made hire a signe  
Semynge to synne-warde,  
And some tyme he gan taste 8720

Aboute the mouth, or bynethe 8721  
Bigynneth to grope,  
Til eitheres wille wexeth kene,  
And to the werke yeden,  
As wel in fastyngdayes and Fridaies  
As forboden nyghtes,  
And as wel in Lente as out of Lente,  
Alle tymes y-liche.  
Swiche werkes with hem  
Were nevere out of seson,  
Til thei myghte na-moore ;  
And thanne murye tales, 8732  
And how that lecchours lovye  
Laughen and jopen,  
And of hir harlotrye and horedom  
In hir elde tellen.

Thanne Pacience perceyved  
Of pointes of this cote,  
That were colomy thorough coveitise  
And unkynde desiryng ;  
Moore to good than to God  
The gome his love caste,  
And ymagynede how 8743  
He it myghte have  
With false mesures and met,  
And with fals witnesse ;  
Lened for love of the wed,  
And looth to do truthe ;  
And awaited thorough which  
Wey to bigile,  
And menged his marchaundise,  
And made a good moustre ;  
“The worste withinne was,  
A greet wit I let it, 8754

And if my neghebore hadde any  
 Or any beest ellis,                      [hyne.  
 Moore profitable than myn,  
 Manye sleightes I made  
 How I myghte have it,  
 Al my wit I caste.  
 And but I it hadde by oother wey,  
 At the laste I stale it ;  
 Or priveliche his purs shook,  
 And unpikede hise lokes ;  
 Or by nyghte or by daye  
 Aboute was ich evere,                      8766  
 Thorugh gile to gaderen  
 The good that ich have.

“ If I yede to the plowgh,  
 I pynched so narwe,  
 That a foot lond or a forow  
 Fecchen I wolde  
 Of my nexte neghebore,  
 And nymen of his erthe.  
 And if I repe, over-reche,  
 Of yaf hem reed that ropen  
 To seise to me with hir sikel                      8777  
 That I ne sew nevere.

“ And who so borwed of me,  
 A-boughte the tyme  
 With presentes prively,  
 Or paide som certeyn ;  
 So he wolde or noght wolde,  
 Wynnen I wolde,  
 And bothe to kith and to kyn  
 Unkynde of that ich hadde.

“ And who so cheped my chaffare,  
 Chiden I wolde,                      8788

But he profrede to paie 8789  
A peny or tweyne  
Moore than it was worth ;  
And yet wolde I swere  
That it coste me nuche moore,  
And swoor manye othes.

“On holy daies at holy chirche  
Whan ich herde masse,  
Hadde I nevere wille, woot God,  
Witterly to biseche  
Mercy for my mysdedes,  
That I ne moorned moore 8800  
Nor losse of good, leve me,  
Than for my likames giltes.  
As if I hadde dedly synne doon,  
I dredde noght that so soore,  
As when I lened, and leved it lost,  
Or longe er it were paid.  
So if I kidde any kyndenesse  
Myn even cristen to helpe,  
Upon a cruwel coveitise  
Myn herte gan hange.

“And if I sente over see 8811  
My servauntz to Brugges,  
Or into Puce-lond my prentis,  
My profit to waiten,  
To marchaunden with moneie,  
And maken hire eschaunges,  
Mighte nevere me conforte.  
In the mene while  
Neither masse ne matynes,  
No none maner sightes ;  
Ne nevere penaunce perfournede,  
Ne pater-noster seide, 8822

That my mynde ne was moore 8823  
 On my good in a doute,  
 Than in the grace of God,  
 And hise grete helpes.

*Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum.*

“Whiche ben the braunches  
 That bryngen a man to sleuthe?  
 He that moorneth noght for hise  
 Ne maketh no sorwe, [mysdedes,  
 And penaunce that the preest en-  
 Perfourneth yvele, [joyneth  
 Dooth noon almesse, 8834

Dred hym of no synne,  
 Lyveth ayein the bileve,  
 And no lawe holdeth,  
 Ech day is holy day with hym,  
 Or an heigh ferye;  
 And, if he aught wole here,  
 It is an harlotes tonge.  
 Whan men carpen of Crist,  
 Or of clenness of soules,  
 He wexeth wroth and wol noght here  
 But wordes of murthe; 8845

Penaunce of povere men,  
 And the passion of seintes,  
 He hateth to here therof,  
 And alle that it telleth.  
 Thise ben the braunches, beth war,  
 That bryngen a man to wanhope.

“Ye lordes and ladies,  
 And legates of holy chirche,  
 That fedeth fooles sages,  
 Flatereris and lieris,  
 And han likynge to lithen hem



To do yow to laughe, 8857

*Væ vobis qui ridetis, etc.*

And gyveth hem mete and mede,

And povere men refuse ;

In youre deeth deyinge,

I drede me ful soore

Lest tho thre manner men

To muche sorwe yow brynge.

*Consentientes et agentes pari pœna  
punientur.*

“ Patriarkes and prophetes,

And prechours of Goddes wordes,

Saven thorough hir sermons

Mannes soule fro helle.

Right so flatereris and fooles

Arn the fendes disciples

To entice men thorough hir tales

To synne and to harlotrie.

Ac clerkes, that knowen holy writ,

Sholde kenne lordes

What David seith of swiche men,

As the Sauter telleth.

*Non habitabit in medio domus meæ,  
qui facit superbiam, et qui  
loquitur iniqua.*

“ Sholde noon harlot have au-

In halle nor in chambre, [dience

Ther wise men were,

Witnesseth Goddes wordes,

Ne no mys-proud man

Amonges lordes ben allowed.

“ Ac flaterers and fooles

Thorough hir foule wordes

Leden tho that loven hem

8890

To Luciferis feste, 8891  
With *Turpiloquio*, a lady of sorwe,  
And Luciferis fithelē.”  
Thus Haukyn the actif man  
Hadde y-soiled his cote,  
Til Conscience acouped hym therof  
In a curteis manere,  
Why he ne hadde whasshen it,  
Or wiped it with a brusshe. 8899





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